

CHRISTIANITY

1877

CIVILIZATION

REV. SAMUEL WEIR, B. D.

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CHRISTIANITY AS A FACTOR IN CIVILIZATION AN EVIDENCE OF ITS SUPERNATURAL ORIGIN

BY

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REV. SAMUEL WEIR, B. D., PH. D.



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PREFACE.

THE subject of the following treatise first attracted the interest of the author in connection with a course of graduate study on the evidences of Christianity. He was impressed with its importance in relation to the present discussion of the best methods by which to present the claims of the Christian religion to those who are inquiring after the truth, or who are seeking the removal of intellectual difficulties. It is evident that the old methods will no longer satisfy the need. The questions involved must be approached from another side if we are to meet the requirements of the present generation. The age is intensely practical. Great questions of sociology and ethics are demanding attention. Problems of practical life are awaiting solution. There is neither time nor taste for abstractions.

These pages are given to the public, not with the assurance that they contain an exhaustive discussion of the subject of Christian evidences, or

even that they completely cover one phase of the question, but with the hope that they may suggest to some readers a line of study, at the same time interesting and profitable. The method adopted is not new, and certainly not without objection; but, in many respects, an historical presentation has advantages.

I have made free use of quotations, and have not hesitated to avail myself of the labors and suggestions of others. I have, however, endeavored to give due credit in each case, and if I have failed in any particular, it is due rather to oversight than to intention.

SAMUEL WEIR.

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CHRISTIANITY

AS A FACTOR IN CIVILIZATION AN EVIDENCE OF ITS SUPERNATURAL ORIGIN.

CHAPTER I.

THE METHOD OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE.

IN a long-continued and widespread warfare the tactics must often be changed and the plan of attack varied. The center of the crisis may shift from place to place as the development of events requires. Each campaign must be planned with reference to the existing situation, and not that which obtained at the beginning of hostilities. In the course of time some of the forces will have been slain, others so weakened by wounds and disease that they become an actual burden in an aggressive warfare. Some of the guns will have been spiked by the enemy or otherwise rendered useless. In every case the forces must be stationed in the most advantageous position possible, and the strongest battalions massed along the most critical line of attack.

The same principles are applicable in the case of Apologetics, that apparently unending literary con-

flict between Christianity and the world. The basis of the first aggressive argument of the Christians was the fulfillment of prophecy and the manifestation of Divine power in miracles. The apostles based their appeal for belief in the Messiahship of Jesus on the fact that he met all the requirements, fulfilled all the conditions, and answered all the descriptions of the Old Testament Messianic prophecies in his person and his life. Jesus himself had given them the example for this mode of appeal. It assailed the prejudices of the Jews in the most rational and convincing manner. The law and the prophets were to them the very spring of hope. Jesus came to fulfill, and did fulfill, the Law and the Prophets.

The argument did not, however, end at this point. The faith of the disciples themselves would not have been satisfied with this. Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." God had given testimony of the mission of Jesus as the Savior in that he raised him from the dead. Here, then, was the vindication of his suffering and death and the evidence of his divinity. To the witness of the resurrection was also added that of the miraculous power of Jesus, manifested in his life and attested by eyewitnesses.

These were the appropriate arguments for the time, and this was the general plan of the apostolic discussion. In fact, it is difficult to conceive how

a successful advance could have been made on any other line of appeal. Paul, it is true, varied the argument in his address to the Athenians, but that was especially in view of philosophic and polytheistic tendencies, and it was particularly applicable to the occasion.

To us, however, the evidences from prophecy and miracle have lost much of their efficacy by the fact that the light in which we must look upon them has been rendered comparatively indistinct by being diffused over the intervening centuries. In the nearer vision of the early Christians, objections could be readily answered, and direct testimony could be brought to bear on the points in dispute.

The conditions have changed in other respects also. A critical and rationalistic age has not hesitated to deny the very existence of prophetic prediction and to assert the impossibility of miracles. It does not and can not deprive miracle and prophecy of all evidential power. Still, in view of the circumstances, these forces must be assigned to a different place in the order of the campaign.

In the second and third centuries most of the objections urged by modern infidelity against Christianity were anticipated by its literary opponents. (See Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, II, 86.)

So far as the warfare was waged with the Jews, the old argument from prophecy served the purpose, having received additional force from the fulfill-

ment of the prediction of Jesus regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the fate of the Jews as a nation.

In their discussions with the heathen, the Christian apologists were placed on the defensive with regard to the history of miracles in the Gospel. The argument of prophecy is used to meet the challenge of Christianity on the ground of its late appearance. There was need of a preparation period of which the Old Testament gives account. It is even necessary in this time to defend the character of the Christians against the charge of immorality. But there is some compensation in the evidence afforded by the rapid spread of Christianity through purely moral means, and in the face of the greatest obstacles. The Christian also urged the adaptation of Christianity to the deepest needs of human life. Besides it was rational and in perfect agreement with the highest philosophy. (Schaff, II, 82-120.)

Thus at each period of its history the defenders of Christianity assumed the position required by the spirit of their time. In each case they soon adjusted themselves to the new circumstances. It is a gratifying fact that in no instance was Christianity left without worthy advocates whenever her claims met with opposition. The arguments and the history of nearly two thousand years have built about her fortifications which may well be considered impregnable. But in the warfare which

is now being waged incessantly by every plan of attack, and by innumerable weapons of assault, there is danger that her progress may be greatly impeded, her friends severely wounded, and her benignant reign disturbed and weakened.

But what form of discussion is most suitable or effective in the present day? The question is not easy. "We are, as it were, in the very focus of the storm. It is not that every now and then there is a burst of thunder and a glare of lightning; but the whole air is electric with quivering flames. And what is the point around which all the dangers of the storm converge? Not around minor questions, the mere *adiaphora* of theology, the things unessential, respecting which there need be only charity; but the storm now rages about the very ark of God. It is the Divinity of Christ himself which is called in question, and we are challenged to prove that the most sacred archives of our religion are not a delusion or a lie. Nor is it any longer against this or that treatise that we must defend the most vital principles of Christian doctrine. It is against whole literatures; it is against whole philosophies; it is against the vague doubts of eminent thinkers; it is against innumerable sneers, the repeated assumptions, the ever-varying criticisms of a powerful and intellectual press." (Farrar, *Witness of History to Christ*, page 6.)

It is evident, then, that not one form of argu-

ment, not one plan of defense alone is sufficient. To one who looks on while the storm continues, while the conflict rages, the whole scene may appear bewildering. Yet no one can well be indifferent. The old question, "What think ye of Christ?" must find an answer in the mind of every intelligent man within the bound of Christendom. The subject can not be ignored. Especially is it incumbent upon every Christian believer "to be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in him." Nay, more, he ought to be able to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine."

It is not, however, the province of Christian apology to produce an irresistible conviction. The evidence can never be perfectly satisfactory without faith and a personal experience of the energy of Christianity. The process must be similar to that which obtains in physical science. The truth of a scientific hypothesis does not rest on reasoning alone. Reason prepares the way and enables the investigator to formulate his hypothesis. The test and the vindication of its truth is experiment. It is the function of Christian evidence to prepare the way for seekers after truth, and to confirm the faith of believers. Nor could it be otherwise. Coercive or irresistible argument would rob men of moral responsibility in relation to the acceptance or the rejection of Christianity. The very conditions of our being forbid it. Mathematical certainty can

not be demanded or expected. We do not ask for it in the highest concerns of our present life. It is enough that we have reasonable grounds for our faith. Experience must be vindication for the rest.

The witness for Christ is necessarily manifold. The Christian advocate must be like the bee, which gathers honey from every blooming field and every opening flower to increase the wealth of its treasure store. The gleaners must bring from far and near the gathered fruits of knowledge. The most varied, critical, and profound learning of the age is devoted to the cause of Christianity. Archæology, geography, history, social and political science, physical science, philology, intellectual and moral science, and even mathematics, are drawn into the defense of the cross. The main problem is to select that which is most palpable, appropriate, and convincing, and to present the arguments in such relations that their cumulative effect may be most powerfully felt; for in this respect the whole is much greater than the sum of all its parts.

The ordinary formal theological presentation of the evidences of Christianity begins with the antecedent probability and reasonableness of revelation. Then follows the argument from miracles and prophecy, supported and re-enforced in various ways. Next comes the internal evidence of the Bible, based upon its accordance with reason, with obvious fact, with common experience, and with history as otherwise known. The argument from

the success of the gospel and from its historical effects is usually left to the last place and given the least prominence in the system. In fact, it would seem that, until recently, this phase of the subject had not received the attention to which it is logically entitled. Yet, it must be apparent that, leaving aside *a priori* considerations, this must be the most obvious starting-point. "There is now a new past of eighteen centuries which visibly belongs to him; in which his manifestation is completed, not by prospect, but by retrospect; in which the power of his light and grace has been seen actually working to subdue to him the human soul and human society, proving itself a power unique in man's experience, and at least suggesting to belief that it comes from above. Through them it is natural to go back to the past. It must be a mistake to fix the mind at once on the dim remoteness of prophecy, without approaching it through that other evidence, cognate in nature and surely not inferior in power, which is afforded us by the actual history of the kingdom so long foretold. . . . The significance of the miracle is its manifestation of a divine power over the present in the person of the Christ, when it pleased him to veil his glory in human flesh. But we have in present reality that unique and transcendent power which his truth and grace are at this moment exercising over the world. . . . God gives to each age its own signs to lead men to Christ. We, in this nineteenth cen-

tury, have signs different from those of the Apostolic Age. . . . We stand face to face with an actual Christianity, unquestionably the most marvelous spiritual phenomenon in the world's history. Through it we may best hope to understand what was the great reality from which it sprang.' (Barry, *Manifold Witness for Christ*, 205-207.)

This, then, is the task before us, to set forth in brief outline the effect of Christianity in civilization as an evidence of its supernatural origin. This is plainly no easy undertaking. Our civilization is complex. The different elements which compose it are so numerous and so varied, and above all their lines of development intertwine so intricately, that it is a difficult matter to trace out the course and measure the influence of any one factor. In every ancient civilization there was a unity of character. The principle of unity might vary in different nations and at different times. Nevertheless, there was in each case one dominant, essential characteristic. It will hardly be maintained that this is true of modern civilization. "All the principles of social organization are found existing together within it. Powers temporal, powers spiritual, the theocratic, monarchic, aristocratic, and democratic elements, all classes of society, all the social situations, are jumbled together and visible within it, as well as infinite gradations of liberty, of wealth, and of influence." (Guizot, *History of Civilization*, Alden edition, page 27.)

It may still be possible, however, to see how the spirit of Christianity animates the whole. For Christianity is not so much a system of doctrine, a code of morals, or an organized visible power as a life. It is the life of the Master perpetuating itself in believers. It is the spirit of the gospel animating society. It is the leaven of purity and power working its way unseen. True, it is necessarily associated with doctrine, but systems of theology may exist apart from the life of Christianity. It is related to morality as a productive power. It has manifested itself for the most part through the efficiency of an organized body. It is natural that it should be so. But we must distinguish clearly between Christianity and the Church. They were not always inseparable. In saying this we do not wish to be understood as ignoring the power of the Church. "Looking only to worldly means, and putting out of the question the aids and superintending power of Divine Providence, and considering only the natural effects of natural causes, it would be difficult to say how Christianity, if it had continued what it was at first, a mere belief, an individual conviction, could have withstood the shock occasioned by the dissolution of the Roman Empire and the invasion of the barbarians." (Guizot, *History of Civilization*, page 26.)

But as the body without the soul is dead, so the Church without the animating spirit of Christianity is dead also. Christianity is no more respon-

sible for the blunders and crimes and corruption of the Church than republicanism for the crimes that have been committed in the name of liberty. It is only an essential characteristic of the intervening stages of conflict before complete victory is secured that corruption should assume the garb of purity, and bring disgrace upon its fair name.

Civilization, of course, manifests itself in two ways, and may be estimated by two standards,—its influence upon the individual, and its progress in society. Here, however, there is a mutual action and reaction. Individual and social improvement are intimately connected. Christianity addressed itself primarily, and still makes its appeal, to the individual. Through the individual it has affected the society; for society is composed of individuals, not of impersonal masses. Yet, when the influence of religion has completed the circle, its effect may often be more palpable in the society than in the individual. “The public consciousness of religious obligation is frequently more pronounced and effective, as well as more enduring, than the individual conviction; religion works most freely and fruitfully through the social organism; and the public development may reveal its presence and inspiration where they are hardly as clearly discernible in the private life of separate souls.” (Storrs, *Divine Origin*, etc., page 28; attributed to Ewald.)

This fact will explain also, in part at least, the apparent anomaly in civilized society that occasion-

ally those who have been professedly opponents to the Christian faith have been persons most clearly imbued with its principles. The plane to which such persons have been elevated by the moral regeneration of society has afforded them peculiar advantages in combating the very system and power by the influence of which they have attained their exalted position. Through a common misapprehension of the real situation, the true explanation of this phenomenon and its bearing upon the question of the potency of Christian civilization have frequently been totally misunderstood and their lessons misapplied.

CHAPTER II.

ANTECEDENT CONDITIONS.

THE condition of the pre-Christian and the imperial age forms the fitting background for a representation of the achievements of Christianity. In Judaism there had been a long preparation for the Messiah. From the call of Abraham down through the history of the patriarchs, there was in process of development a spirit of exclusiveness and the anticipation of exalted destiny. The handful of people who went down to Egypt grew to national greatness in the midst of adversities which only served to knit the bond of union closer. During the period of the Judges and the reign of the Kings to Solomon, the position of the Israelites in the world continued to be unique. The division of the kingdom and the subsequent events confirmed the hope of Judah. The captivity occurred after the principle of Monotheism and Divine Sovereignty had been firmly established, and when the Jews were able to maintain their faith in the midst of temptation and persecution. The Messianic expectation was modified indeed, but intensified rather than diminished by the calamities of the Maccabean struggle and the dispersion of the people. The influence of prophecy which had been such an impor-

tant factor throughout the Jewish history, maintained its power even after the canon of the Old Testament had been closed. No calamity could destroy its force. The Law and the Prophets continued to be read with unabated interest in the synagogues which had sprung up as meeting-places for the scattered people.

Two principles of union especially were co-operating to bind inseparably together the Jews of the Dispersion—the great Messianic hope and the influence of Jerusalem. The former stamped its impression upon the religious practices and the character of the people, upon their mode of life, and the relations of society. It intensified their exclusiveness, and inspired a stubborn determination of endurance in time of persecution. This was true alike in Judea and Alexandria, in Babylon and in Rome. There were minor differences among the Jews of different countries, but the essential characteristics were the same.

Many sacred memories clustered about Jerusalem; many were the bright hopes that centered there. There stood the Temple, with its altars of sacrifice and Holy of Holies, with its massive wealth and imposing ritual. Toward Jerusalem the eyes of each faithful Jew were turned in both private and public worship. To Jerusalem the Temple tribute was sent up annually from every synagogue. Every Jew made it a point to go up to Jerusalem at least once in his lifetime, and

attend one of the great feasts in the Holy City. There can be no doubt that the centralizing influence of Jerusalem played an important part in the rapid spread of Christianity during the ministry of the apostles.

Nevertheless, the old spirit of Judaism had departed never to return. There was no longer any prophet in Judah. Traditionalism had imposed upon the people a system of exacting ceremonies and legal restrictions. Worship was formal, lifeless, and consequently unsatisfactory. Religious devotion consisted in formal observance of exacting rules. It was barren of results. Morality was a matter of outward appearance, not of the heart. National pride was more to be guarded than inward purity. Ceremonial defilement was more a thing of dread than inward corruption. To violate the scrupulous exactness of the common religious social etiquette was sin. There was no hope for the fallen, no redemption for the outcast, and no salvation for the Gentile unless he became a proselyte.

The times had degenerated. The old prophetic heroism was forgotten. How far all this is from the spirit of Christianity must be very apparent. No wonder that when Messiah came "his own received him not." Christianity must come into conflict with a fossilized Judaism. The struggle was severe and determined, yet it could have but one conclusion. Judaism had served out its time.

The prominent characteristics of heathenism were equally significant, but not more encouraging. In the East the struggle of the old Zoroastrian faith between the God of Light and the King of Darkness still raged, and there was no immediate prospect of victory. The Magians had indeed a more definite expectation of desires accomplished, but were yet filled with uncertainty. China had settled into the state of stagnation, from which it is even now only imperceptibly emerging. The Hindoos had experienced a development in their philosophical systems, but still darkness overshadowed their land. They needed more light, and knew not how to obtain it.

It is not to be supposed that there was no spiritual inclination in Greece and Rome. The very fact that the gospel made such headway among the Gentile races would teach the opposite of this. "There was a spiritual Israel scattered throughout the heathen world, that never received the circumcision of the flesh, but the circumcision of the heart by the hand of that Spirit which bloweth where it listeth, and is not bound to any human laws and to ordinary means." (Schaff, *History Christian Church*, I, 76.) It would be a denial of Divine Providence not to admit so much. Come from what source it might, there was among the Greeks and Romans the expectation of a coming golden age. Nay, more, both Greece and Rome, not less than Judea, had each its mission to fulfill for the race. "The

Greeks prepared the elements of natural culture, of science and art, for the use of the Church. The Romans developed the idea of law, and organized the civilized world in a universal empire, ready to serve the spiritual universality of the gospel. Both Greeks and Romans were unconscious servants of Jesus Christ, 'the unknown God!'" (Schaff, as above.) Nor can it be denied that the civilization of each country was productive of remarkable results. Even to this day the force of their influence is deeply and widely felt. It has penetrated and affected our literary and educational life to an immeasurable degree. Rome has left its mark on law and legal institutions. Yet it must be remembered that the treasures of Greece and Rome have been transmitted to us, for the most part, through the Christian Church, by whose influence they have been preserved and made serviceable.

They had not availed to preserve Greece or Rome from moral death, nor were they able to effect a regeneration in either. The people of these nations were not irreligious, if numerous temples, continual ceremonies, frequent sacrifices, and exacting ritualistic customs can be called religion. The gods of the Greeks were ideal men, and their worship was bright and cheerful, and in many things attractive. But the gods had the failings and vices as well as the virtues of men. To imitate them would have been to become addicted to intrigue and licentiousness. They had lost whatever

elevating power they may have possessed in the former times. Philosophy tended toward unbelief or lifeless pantheism. The form of religion was retained, but the spirit had departed.

Roman religion was prosaic and legalistic. Everything was prescribed. Punctilious observance of rules was the whole of devotion. There were gods innumerable, and each had his order of worship. In the provinces there was "a strange medley of local and Roman deities." In Rome also this eclecticism forced itself upon the attention. The imperial city began to be cosmopolitan in religion as in everything else. It was a sure sign of the decline of paganism. The day of final dissolution was postponed, but the fatal disease had taken hold.

Among the educated classes there was avowed unbelief. The highest good was in philosophy, but no philosophy was sufficient. The lives of the Epicureans had proved that their master was no safe leader. Stoicism was of a higher order, and its followers of nobler character, but it was utterly powerless to meet the requirements of the time. Hopelessness characterized its spirit, and grim endurance formed its one prescription for all cases.

The old world was eating itself out with corruption. The tide of immorality was raging, and everything gave way before it. Intellectual, commercial, imperial greatness had no power to check it. Livy mourned that Rome was overborne by its

own greatness that men were neither able to bear their vices nor the remedies for them. (Pref. to Hist.) Seneca bemoaned the corrupt state of society, but this did not deter him from plunging into voluptuousness himself. The prevalent corruption manifested itself in every department of life. Marriage was the toleration of a necessary evil, family life a burden. Labor was performed by slaves, who suffered untold hardships, and whose lives were in the hands of their heartless masters. Freemen were idlers supported at public charges. The rich lived in luxury and licentiousness. Public amusements were spectacles of blood. They grew continually more numerous and horrible. Religion was mocked on the stage. Nothing could satisfy the popular clamor for games. Society was thoroughly rotten. Doubtless there were exceptional characters, but these only serve to enhance the gloominess of the picture. The world had gone beyond the possibility of reform. A total regeneration alone could save it.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD.

IT was in this time of the world's greatest need that Christianity came. It was essentially different from either heathenism or Judaism. First of all, it introduced a new conception of God altogether from that which had formerly prevailed. This is true, not merely of the later theological doctrine, but of the essential and vital faith of the early Christians. Christianity, in common with Judaism, brought out clearly and positively the doctrine of the true personality of God. Here they came into direct conflict with the school of the Stoics, whose highest conception of God was the deification of external nature, and whose only providence was an inexorable fate. In the East also Pantheism had largely prevailed. The utmost attainment of the Brahmanic mind was a conception of absolute but impersonal intelligence. Rome deified power and imperial sovereignty in the person of the emperor. There was no approach anywhere to the Jewish and Christian doctrine.

The monotheistic idea had been firmly fixed in the Jewish mind. It was carried over and magnified in Christian thought. It was directly antagonistic to the polytheism of the heathen world.

Nowhere outside of Judaism had the principle of Divine unity maintained itself as a fixed belief prior to the Christian era.

The jealousies, quarrels, contests of the heathen gods form a strange contrast to the supreme power and sovereign rule of the One Almighty God, Creator, Preserver, Ruler of all things animate and inanimate. The belief in Divine Supremacy was maintained against both dualism and polytheism. There could be but one Universal King. Nature itself must bear the mark of the supremacy, unity, and intelligence of its Creator. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The laws of the universe are the expression of his will.

Yet God is not merely "a stern, absolute, unloving will, demanding only to be obeyed." Here Christianity parts company with Judaism, and a knowledge of the Fatherhood of God is revealed. This does not compromise the holiness or the justice of God. The law is not abrogated, the demand of righteousness not superseded, but the Divine love is magnified. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." How manifold, sweet, and wholesome the fruit which that tree bears,—compassion, forgiveness, regeneration, righteousness, providence, impartation of the Spirit, eternity of joy for every one that believeth!

On this point Dr. R. S. Storrs has eloquently

and appropriately observed: "The grandest, tenderest, most inspiring thought which the mind of the world has ever received is this of God, now made familiar to it through Jesus. . . . I do not now argue, you observe, for the truth of this conception of God, but I point to the majesty, harmony, and impressiveness of it, and to its effects, as vital and grand beyond possible cavil. It holds its place while ages pass, as unaffected by changes of custom or mutations of states as the atmosphere is by the waving of trees. It involves supremest blessing and promise. All character rooted in love to the highest, takes from that a supreme glory; philanthropy, heroism, domestic affection, the very passion of patriotism being ennobled and consecrated by it." (Divine Origin, etc., page 62.)

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF MAN.

CHRISTIANITY also introduced a new conception of man. It was necessarily so. Man can not fully know himself without a knowledge of God. The problem of human origin and destiny has otherwise no satisfactory solution. "But wherever a personal God is conceived, from whom man came, whom man resembles in spiritual being, there, as the conception of the Divine One is lifted, the conception of man will be also exalted." (Storrs, *Divine Origin*, page 71.)

The dignity of man as such was not taught by the ancient world. Rome honored men of power and wealth, but held countless slaves in abject terror, and ruled over the barbarians with a rod of iron. The Greeks paid homage to genius, but did not exalt our common human nature. The twice-born Brahman came into affinity with supreme intelligence, as he believed, but the Sudras were beyond hope. Buddhism failed in its conception of the reality and immortality of the soul. Judaism recognized the nobility of human origin, the dignity of human life, the possibilities of human destiny for the highest and the lowest in the nation, but it offered no consolation to the Gentiles.

Christianity had no place for any such distinctions. "There was neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." Salvation was possible to all, of whatever race or condition. It is difficult even to conceive what a revolution this involved. A Gentile touch, which formerly brought pollution, now conveyed only the thrill of Christian love. The barriers were broken down, "the mountains were brought low, the valleys exalted." Before the cross human distinctions vanished. All men came from the creative hand of one common Father, before whom they were equal.

The worth of man was recognized in the plan of salvation. Neither the Theogonies of the East, nor the Apotheoses of the Greeks, could attain to the union of manhood and Divinity. Christianity solved that problem also in the manifestation of the incarnate Son of God. And if, as the Christians believed, God sent his Son into the world in the form of man—if he labored and suffered to redeem man from evil—there must still have been something worthy of redemption. To despise life, to reject hope, to neglect opportunity, could no longer be right. God loved man, not for what he had been, but for what he might become. Henceforth he must be taught to look up.

But what was there for him in the future? Let the Christian answer again. He was assured of immortality. There remained neither the skepticism of the Greek and Roman nor the endless trans-

migrations of the Hindoo, but an immediate translation into a better life. Of course, Christianity did not promise an eternity of bliss to all without conditions, but the conditions were such as all might fulfill. Toward a glorious immortality all expectation turned. It was the hope of unending reward which revived the drooping spirits of men and inspired the martyr zeal.

It is not affirmed, nor can it be supposed, that the Christian idea of man won its way at once to universal acceptance. It had to contend against the combined forces of skepticism, imperialism, and Jewish narrowness. Even now, after nearly nineteen hundred years of conflict, it has not gained complete mastery. None can deny, however, that Christianity held firmly to such an exalted idea of manhood, whatever the source might be from which it came.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF WORSHIP.

CHRISTIANITY also introduced a new idea of man's relation to God. It may be summed up in the one word "worship." The early Christians offered no sacrifices in the ordinary meaning of the term. For this reason they were accounted Atheists. From the time of Abel, men had offered sacrifices. Among the Hebrews such offerings were under Divine regulation, and they had a profound symbolical and typical signification. The system of temple service degenerated in later times, but did not entirely lose its significance for the more spiritually minded of the people.

All sorts of offerings and gifts were placed on the altars of heathenism. Gold and jewels, the fruits of the field, the choicest of the flocks and herds, captives and children, were accounted fit presents for the gods, to satisfy their needs, appease their anger, or court their favor.

There was none of all this in Christianity. Christ was offered once for all on Calvary as a voluntary sacrifice for sin. He was the perfect manifestation of Divine love and the sufficient pledge of Divine goodness. So far as the Hebrew worship was preparatory, it was fulfilled in him and

superseded by him. "There remained no more sacrifice for sin."

The central idea of Christian worship is self-devotion as a thank-offering to God, not in austere asceticism, but in consecrated, living activity. Paul expresses it in one sentence, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Self-surrender is the law of the Christian life. It besieges the very citadel of unrighteousness. It strikes at the root of selfishness. It subdues passion, overturns pride, conquers ambition, destroys all sensuality. It drives out from the heart the last lurking foe of righteousness. It makes the experiences of life sacred, the practical affairs of every day an incense offering to God. It makes the business of the world a stewardship of God's gifts. "The sacrifice of self to the service of God, which is the first element in the new worship, is to be a free and voluntary offering, spontaneously brought in the impulse of love, and through the attractions of that glory of God which resides in his grace. The work, for its own sake, is relatively nothing. The adoring, self-forgetful, fervent spirit, jubilant with divine affection, that is supreme." (Storrs, *Divine Origin*, 114.)

You say this is abstract and ideal. It is ideal, but neither abstract nor visionary. It is the very principle of spiritual life. It is the true ideal of

practical, living activity. It involves the transformation of the soul's energy into the kinetic force of devoted heroism.

How far the ideal has been realized, it is not necessary at this point to inquire. No doubt it has been attained in countless instances. It must be measurably realized by every Christian.

This law of Christian worship left its impress on all outward forms. Art and music were sanctified by it. The sanctuary itself was hallowed by it. Not alone in temple and church, but in the inner chamber of the consecrated heart, is the shrine of the Almighty. Time and place could form no limitation to the power of Christian worship. By its own nature it consecrated all times and all places.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF MAN'S DUTY TO MAN.

A NEW conception of man's relation to man was presented to the world in Christianity. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John xiii, 34.) This was not a mere spirit of clannishness among members of the same society. It was more spiritual, humane, and inclusive than anything that had been dreamed of by heathenism. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. v, 44.) Such were the principles that passed over into the life of the Christian Church at a very early period. "Among themselves Christians called each other brethren, and this fraternal name was no mere word. They lived as brothers." (Ulhorn, Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism, 196.) Fraternal love extended even to strangers who were simply recommended as Christians. Fraternity was honored as a duty and cherished as a privilege. Race and social distinctions made no difference. Christ himself walked the humbler paths of life. His disciples could not despise the lowly. Christ

came as a Savior for all men. His disciples were intrusted with a universal gospel. They were charged with being enemies of mankind; but in reality they were "all things to all men," that by some means they might win the world for Christ and his salvation.

The kindness of the Christians was extended even to their enemies. This was demanded by their conception of duty and by the principles of their faith. Evil must be overcome with good. The Christian martyr could pray for the heathen emperor who ordered his death. Christianity suffered deeply, but suffered in silence. There were no curses for the persecutors.

The duty of charity did not cease with the wants of believers. "Fraternal love expanded to a universal love of man. The Church, born of love, and living in love, was the appropriate organ for the practice of love. It interested itself first in those of its members who needed help in any way; then it went beyond them to embrace in its love those who stood without." (Ulhorn, *Conflict*, etc., 197.) It was not merely the brotherhood of Christians, but the brotherhood of man, which the Gospel inculcated, and which the early Christians practiced.

It is almost needless to say that the attitude of heathenism was very different. Of self-denial and disinterested love it knew nothing. Its much praised magnanimity was nothing but lofty pride.

Hospitality was confined to friends. Benevolence was a sacrifice to vanity. Such a thing as Christian love or charity was unknown. "In spite of the finest maxims of a few philosophers, the imperial age was controlled by the coldest selfishness." (Schaff, Hist., 2373.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE OUTWARD VICTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

FARRAR finds five gigantic obstacles to the outward victory of Christianity: Judaism within the Church demanding observance of the Mosaic ritual, and without fortified by fifteen hundred years of gorgeous worship; paganism with its imperial harshness, its skepticism and vice; heresies within the Church, especially after the era of Constantine; barbarian invasions; Mohammedanism. (Witness of History to Christ, chap. iii.)

Gibbon enumerates five causes for the rapid spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire: The zeal of the early Christians; the belief in future rewards and punishments; the power of miracles; the austere morals of the Christians; and the compact Church organization. (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chap. xv.)

Merivale traces the conversion of the Roman Empire mainly to four causes: The external evidence of miracles and of the apparent fulfillment of recorded prophecy to the truth of Christianity; the internal evidence of satisfying the acknowledged need of a Redeemer and Sanctifier; the goodness and holiness manifested in the lives and deaths of the primitive believers; the temporal success of

Christianity under Constantine. (Convers. of the Rom. Emp., Pref.)

Lecky ascribes the triumph of Christianity to its own excellence and its adaptation to the needs of the time. "No other religion under such circumstances had ever combined so many distinct elements of power and attraction. Unlike the Jewish religion, it was bound by no local ties, and was equally adapted for every nation and for every class. Unlike Stoicism, it appealed in the strongest manner to the affections, and offered all the charms of a sympathetic worship. Unlike the Egyptian religion, it united with its distinctive teaching a pure and noble system of ethics, and proved itself capable of realizing it in action. It proclaimed, amid a vast movement of social and national amalgamation, the universal brotherhood of mankind. Amid the softening influence of philosophy and civilization, it taught the supreme sanctity of love. To the slave, who had never before exercised so large an influence over Roman religious life, it was the religion of the suffering and the oppressed." (Hist. European Morals, I, 412.)

However true this may be, it is not the whole truth. The strength of Christianity was in the person of Jesus, not by reason of his superiority as a teacher, but as the source of spiritual life. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." No faith in his example, nor any influence of his teaching as a mere ethical code would have proved

sufficient for the conflict and the victory. Eliminate the essential life principle, and nothing needs explaining more than the explanation. What was the ultimate cause of Gibbon's five causes? There is the very heart of the question.

When the body of Jesus was laid away in the tomb, hope died within his disciples, and apparent triumph rejoiced the hearts of his enemies; for now they supposed "that deceiver" would trouble them no more. Their rejoicing was of short duration. Rumors of a restoration to life are passed from one to another. The tomb is found empty. The soldiers are terrified. The enemies are perplexed. The scattered disciples are again banded together. For forty days their master was seen alive by them, and they then saw him ascend into the heavens. They wait at Jerusalem in expectation. Ten days pass. Suddenly a great commotion arises. The people rush together, now offering, now demanding explanation. Peter preaches. Three thousand people are added to the number of the disciples. The fire spreads. Threats and persecution can not control it. The disciples are teaching in Jerusalem, at Joppa, in Samaria, and Damascus. Saul the persecutor becomes Paul the missionary. The work grows in every direction. No power on earth can stop it. The seeds of truth are scattered in Antioch, Cyprus, Pisidia, Phrygia, Galatia, Macedonia, Corinth, Rome, Spain, Babylon. Churches are established and the work is organized. The

mantle of the apostles falls on devoted successors, who carry on their labors with continued zeal.

Meanwhile, however, opposition has deepened and taken form. Judaism will not suffer itself to be deprived so readily of its ancestral heritage. Within the body of believers there is a demand for ceremonial which threatens the Church with disruption. A happy compromise tides over the difficulty until the destruction of Jerusalem and the increased number of the Gentile converts substantially terminate it.

Hatred from without will admit no compromise. It determines upon a war of extermination. But all its rage is in vain. Providence has fixed its limitations. Judaism lies crushed and bleeding beneath the Roman power that has laid low the city and the citadel of its hopes. It has no power for persecution, no power even for self-defense.

Harder and more continuous was the struggle with heathenism. Rome, that colossal giant of imperial power, ruled the world. It could brook no rival. Silently but mightily Christianity was growing and gaining ground. It had nothing in common with imperialism. It was pervaded with the spirit of liberty. A conflict was inevitable. With a prophetic instinct of fear the giant pitched upon it. Persecution raged with tempestuous fury. With the majestic grandeur of heroic suffering, Christianity bowed its head to the storm, but pushed its way onward. Men do not die for their dreams.

The world saw that there was life which no ordinary weapons of warfare could destroy. For three centuries, with but brief intervals of rest, the battle went on, with determined persecution on the one hand, and unflinching resistance on the other.

Meanwhile the weaker foe grows strong, the stronger weak. An attempt is made to revive the sinking fortunes of Rome by a moral reformation. An eclectic system of religious philosophy is formed by a combination of elements taken from the old heathen forms of worship and the Platonic speculations. It was a vain, monstrous mockery. The decaying religion of heathenism could not be resuscitated.

The pen of paganism did not prove more successful. That was a weapon both sides could use. The better argument of the Christians prevailed. They had all the advantages of their opponents, with the additional force of satisfactory and convincing truth.

After three hundred years of vain opposition, its sword blunted with slaughter, its heart weary of bloodshed and sick with failure, imperialism bowed at the door of the Church and humbly sought for admission.

It must not be supposed, however, that the victory was now complete. The emperor himself was but half converted. The Church, elated with its victory, forgot to put a triple guard about its purity. It had gained control of the Empire, but

the enemy was neither dead nor sleeping. Flattered by the favors of Constantine, the Church conceded too much. It was besieged by uninstructed masses seeking for admission to its communion. While persecution continued, sincerity was assured and purity maintained. The conflict is no longer one of blood, but it is not less dreadful on that account. It was here especially that the tendencies developed which make it necessary to distinguish between Christianity and the Church. Christianity must contend within the Church itself against pride, immorality, unbelief, and stagnation. Truly the "treasure was held in earthen vessels."

There was a struggle for pure doctrine. The great fundamental questions of the Trinity and of the person of Christ had yet to be settled. Manicheans, Donatists, Patripassians, Sabellians, Arians, must be confuted and silenced. The conflict is humiliating, pitiable, but it reaches a happy issue, and the doctrine of the Church is ultimately defined and guarded by the decrees of four great Councils.

But again there are signs of a gathering storm. A cloud arises in the North, spreads in every direction, comes sweeping on with the force of a tempest, and breaks in torrents upon the Empire and the Church. The Empire of the West falls with a crash. Not so the Church. Strengthened by a compact organization and a central power, it turns conqueror upon the conquerors. Providence and time are wonder-workers. The barbarians are

transformed into civilized nations, refined by a true faith, practicing a new morality, and cultivating the arts of peace.

Yet one more foe from without must be met. It arose among the wild Arabs, the descendants of the ancient Ishmaelites. Its fundamental doctrine was, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet;" its propaganda the sword. Moved by a blind fatalism, its votaries feared no enemy. Once fully established, it swept like an avalanche over Arabia and Syria. It settled in North Africa and Spain, where it entered into conflict with Christianity, and was eventually expelled only after centuries of opposition. It finally overcame the Eastern Empire, and it still holds the sovereignty of Turkey. The Crusades were not altogether the result of fanaticism. However misguided they may seem, they were but stages in the great battle of the Church with the stubborn power of Mohammed. The victory was won. Mohammedanism settled down into fatal apathy.

The fruit of the sudden conversion of the Empire and the infusion of heathen life into the Church had already begun to appear. Nobly had the Church stood in time of severe trial. The power of her organization had fully proved itself. But the world was not yet conquered. The organic power of the Church pressed over too far. It lost its true position as servant of Christianity and assumed to take away the liberty of the individual.

It congealed into selfishness, it hardened into narrowness and oppression. The Church still had spirit within it, but it was constrained. It had life within, but it was confined. Christianity was still alive, but it must now wage its warfare on the very organization which had protected it. Imperialism in the Church was no better than imperialism in the State, inquisitorial fires no better than Roman swords. Corruption in the Church was as detestable as corruption in heathenism. Pure Christianity could not endure it. It must arise and shake off the chains of lethargy and unbelief. It must break forth from its bounds. The great struggle of the sixteenth century was a renewal of the old conflict with the world. "The Romish hierarchy fell, but Christian truth was saved."

Again the pendulum swung round too far. Individual liberty made room for rationalism, and rationalism opened the door for licentiousness. The brilliancy of thought in France and England toward the close of the seventeenth century was but the glare of an artificial flame. It died away to leave nothing but charred remains and smoky embers.

A cloud of unbelief settled like a pall over Europe in the eighteenth century. If the testimony of historians be true, it is scarcely possible to paint the picture in colors too dark. In this century Germany was visited with a reaction in religion; France with a deluge of skepticism; England by religious stagnation, moral decay, and

political corruption. Infidelity prophesied the death of Christianity, and essayed to write its funeral dirge.

But "man's extremity is God's opportunity." The same power of Christianity which had proved itself for the emergencies of former times was the regenerating life of that dark age. Religion revived. On the Continent piety was restored. England was saved and reformed and fortified against a new attack of infidelity. France expiated her apostasy in the blood of the Revolution, and her atheistic dreams vanished. Christianity entered on a new era of conquest. Her borders were enlarged, her influence intensified.

The missionary spirit has taken hold on this age. The light is slowly penetrating the dark places of the earth. The rainbow of promise is distinctly visible in the sky. That power which has conquered so many enemies and has established itself on such firm footing will surely accomplish what remains to be done. Faithful watchers even now fancy they can catch the first beams of the millennial glory, and they are confident of the future.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIANITY AND FAMILY LIFE.

IT is now generally admitted that the proper basis of society is the home. No exaltation of the principle of individual liberty and independence, no extension of the State idea, can deprive this age of its fundamental faith in the dignity and nobility of family life. Perhaps there is no dearer sentiment of the human heart, no tenderer sympathy than the affection that centers in the home and clings to the dear ones that gather about the family hearth. How well remembered are the scenes and the faces, the kindly words, and the deeds of love! How long cherished the memories of that sacred place! No affection of earth touches more nearly the core of human life.

It was not always so. The cruelties of imperial Rome can scarcely be realized. A father might, as he chose, kill his children or abandon them. Whoever rescued a deserted child might keep it and train it for a slave. Female children that had been exposed to death were frequently taken up and reared for a worse fate. "So completely had luxury eaten away the natural instincts in one class, and so deep and degrading was the misery in another, that parents were found willing to abandon their offspring

to the worst of destinies in order to escape inconvenience, anxiety, or burden ; these little ones, be it remembered, being not usually the fruit of illicit connection, but the children of legal marriage." (Brace, in *Gesta Christi*.) This was not in isolated cases, but by the wholesale ; and, worst of all, it had the sanction of legal permission. "The exposition of children," says Gibbon, "was the prevailing and stubborn vice of antiquity. It was sometimes prescribed, often permitted, always practiced with impunity, by the nations who never entertained the Roman ideas of paternal power ; and the dramatic poets, who appeal to the human heart, represent with indifference a popular custom which was palliated by motives of economy and compassion." (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xlv.)

Not in Rome only did this practice prevail. "For it is to be observed that it was as common in the Hellenic States as ever on the Tiber." (Storrs, *Divine Origin*, etc., 140.) Plato advocated the exposition of children physically weak, or whose parents were unable to support them. The paternal right of the disposition of children existed in Greece as well as in Rome. "Natural affection was not the organizing principle of the family in the contemplation of ancient law, either in Europe or in the East." (Storrs, as above.)

Of course, the natural instinct could not be wholly destroyed. There must have been many instances of children guarded in the home with pater-

nal affection. But society was corrupt, and the common practice was revolting in the extreme. Stoicism raised a bold but feeble arm of resistance. It was not able to accomplish anything either in practical morals or in legislation.

The Hebrews cherished a noble instinct of family life. With them children were considered a gift from God. They were carefully trained. They were as carefully protected as any other members of society. A sacredness attached to certain epochs in their growth and training. But in this, as in other things, the Hebrew practice did not pass beyond the bounds of the nation. The Hebrew sentiment did not penetrate the heathen darkness.

Christianity surpassed Judaism even in its conception of the nobility of childhood. Child-life received the highest honor in the history of the infant Jesus. There was a divine halo about everything connected with the life of the Holy Child. Moreover, when he afterwards took young children in his arms, and declared that "of such is the kingdom of heaven," it was the "coronation of childhood, and the exaltation of parentage." From the very beginning Christianity sanctified paternal affection.

The Church waged an incessant warfare against the destruction of children. The voice of the fathers was raised in indignant protest against it. Where the spirit of Christianity gained control the evil could not exist.

But the case presented serious difficulty. When a better sentiment began to prevail, the desperate poverty of the Empire was an embarrassing problem. Constantine, in 315 A. D., passed a law forbidding "parents from using a parricidal hand on their newborn children," and providing for the support at public expense of the children of indigent parents. It was a long time, however, before the practice of exposing children could be corrected. As late as the eighth century the practice was still prevalent in Europe. Meantime the Churches had to make charitable provision for the care of foundlings. Here was the germ from which "has sprung the long list of Christian charities for children in all civilized countries; asylums, refuges, *creches*, infant and industrial schools, reformatory institutions and aid societies without number, caring for the orphan, the blind, the deaf and dumb, the crippled and defective, the foundling and the outcast." (*Gesta Christi*, 82.)

If Christianity had accomplished nothing else in civilization than the liberation of childhood, it would still be worthy of high praise. The health of the child is now an object of tender solicitude, his training a matter of diligent care, his afflictions and childish sorrows a call for affectionate sympathy, the developing powers and the possibilities of his life a cause for earnest regard and expectant hope. Such it is at least where Christianity has its highest acknowledgment.

THE POSITION OF WOMAN.

There has likewise been an almost inconceivable change in the position of woman since the reign of Christianity began. "Excepting among the Jews, woman never attained in all antiquity to adequate recognition as a human being. She had no higher virtue than that of the slave, except in rare instances. Her husband was her master, to whom she had to accede in all things. Dissolute women enjoyed higher social honor at Rome than faithful housewives. Concubinage became the general custom, and was recognized in law. Habitual and contemptuous distrust of the sex was in the very life of the governing classes. It ruled custom, shaped statutes, and entered with depraving and dominating force the highest minds." (Storrs *Divine Origin*, etc., 150.)

The daughter was held strictly under the rule of paternal authority. In the case of all children, "the majesty of a parent was armed with the power of life and death." Female children were especially an embarrassment. They were commonly exposed to death. If retained in the household, they were subject to the will of their father. In no case, not even after her father's death, did the daughter attain a position of personal independence. When married, she was under the control of her husband as a part of his possessions. "Her property became the husband's; her consent was not necessary

to the marriage of her daughter; the husband had at least a qualified power over her life for even petty offenses; she could not, after his death, be the legal guardian of her own infant children." (Storrs, as above, 149; also, Gibbon, chap. xlv.)

The position of woman was no better in Greece, but rather worse. Noble as the pictures of early Grecian women may appear, elevating as the practice in the heroic days is supposed to have been, there is no question about the inferior position of woman, even in the palmy days of Greek literature and philosophy. She was debarred from education, and had no part in public life and no share in the employments of men. According to Aristotle, she held an intermediate position between freemen and slaves. Plato regarded the State as wholly disorganized where wives claimed an equality with their husbands. He described women as "by nature prone to secrecy and stealth." The dramatic writers and philosophers were at one in ascribing to woman deception, stupidity, and "lurking secrecy." Only courtesans were held in esteem. "They frequented the lecture-rooms of the philosophers, wrote books, and were on terms of intercourse with prominent statesmen." (Ulhorn, *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism*, 98.) They were associated with the worship of Aphrodite, and so the practice of vice received the sanction of religion.

The position of woman was different in Hebrew society. The names of Miriam, Deborah, Hannah,

and Huldah give a luster to the dignity of the Hebrew female character. The wife had a place of high honor and authority in the family. Chastity was a Hebrew woman's most precious jewel. Children were the chief ornament and joy of the household. The mother was deserving of supreme respect. Yet in the Hebrew system woman possessed no recognized social independence. There was still room for vast improvement.

Mohammedanism began well, but degenerated even within the lifetime of its founder, and ended ingloriously. The condition of woman in Turkey under Mohammedan rule is too well known to need any description.

In India woman holds an unenviable position. "The wife is permitted to be sold or beaten; she is spoken of as having no will of her own, and as unfit for independence." (*Gesta Christi*, ascribed to Williams.) In childhood she depends on her father; in youth on her husband; in old age on her children. The metaphysical doctrines are kept from women lest they should be inspired to seek for freedom. According to the "*Laws of Manu*," woman's obligation to her lord is absolute. The actual situation is the same to-day. Woman is kept in seclusion and subjection.

How different is the position of woman in the present generation throughout Christendom! She holds the place of honor and efficiency in all reform movements and in the dispensation of charity.

In the United States almost all fields of usefulness, and nearly all honorable professions, are open to women. They have the largest share in the education of children. The majority of the best schools and colleges gladly receive them as students. As wives and mothers they wield an influence that largely shapes the character of the people and makes itself felt in every walk of life. In social recognition they are the equals of their husbands and brothers; in social power often their superiors. They enjoy complete personal independence. The rights of property are accorded them. They are under special legal protection. In some States they have an equal share in the government with men.

A woman sits upon the throne of England respected and loved by all her subjects, and honored the world over.

The achievements of woman in modern times are the marvel of the age. In intellectual attainments, on the rostra, and in literature she has proved herself the peer of man; and her ability is all but universally acknowledged.

Women were numbered among the faithful disciples of Christ. They had ministered to his comfort. They had stood by the cross and wept over the cruelty of the people. They were early at the sepulcher to embalm the body of the Lord. They were honored with the first appearance of the risen Savior. They were the first converts in Europe.

They were among the most enthusiastic teachers of the Gospel. Their influence was recognized by the apostles. They were honored as martyrs for the Lord Jesus. They were accorded equal social standing in the Churches. They even received a certain degree of official recognition.

There was an immediate and corresponding influence on the standard of character. The womanly qualities of faith, modesty, absorbing devotion, were at once apparent. The change amounted to a revolution.

The Christian practice exerted an uplifting influence in society at large. Slowly indeed, but surely, did the leaven penetrate the mass of degenerate heathenism. "The larger moral power won by woman by degrees made the tightest legal restrictions loose and elastic, till in spite of the stiffest prejudice of ages, and the wildest license of a passionate revolt, the just and rational liberty of the sex at last came with Christianity into the licentious and ambitious Empire which had fettered and debased it, and which in the end could find nothing more meet to do with woman than to make her gladiator." (Storrs, *Divine Origin*, etc., page 152.)

In their treatment of women the German tribes presented a marked contrast to the Romans. "The German and Scandinavian tribes had an instinctive reverence for the female sex, as being inspired by a divinity, possessed of the prophetic gift, and

endowed with secret charms. Their women shared the labors and dangers of men, and would rather commit suicide than submit to dishonor." (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 4333, referred to Tacitus.) Personal purity was guarded with peculiar care. No indulgence was allowed to unchastity. Monogamy was the almost invariable rule, though polygamy was not entirely unknown.

There was, however, another side to the question. Woman was still under tutelage. True, the German theory of tutelage was that of protection rather than subjection. A woman could not bear arms and defend herself, so she must have a guardian to represent her interests. This spirit was the inspiration of a noble chivalry, but it involved the subjection of woman just as much as the Roman principle. "The wife was entirely in the power of her husband, and could be bought, sold, beaten, and killed." (Schaff, as above.)

Christianity ennobled all that was good in the Teutonic family life. It abolished evil customs. It was a defense against the degenerating influences inherent in heathenism. On this point the author of "*Gesta Christi*" pertinently remarks: "The best results of modern civilization have probably come from the position given to woman in Europe by German customs, purified by the Christian faith. That modern society has not decayed like the ancient, and that pure family life still supplies fresh forces to races a thousand years old, is due, above

all, to the teachings of Christ, acting on German barbaric virtue and respect for woman. The peculiar chivalry in the sentiment towards woman which softened manners and civilized certain classes so much in the Middle Ages, and which still ornaments modern society, is a combined product of the German and the Christian, and is a feature unknown to the classic races." (Page 120.)

The tendency of Christianity has always been towards the elevation of woman. It has continually aided in broadening her opportunities and enhancing her position in society. Its history contains a noble record of womanly virtue, power, and achievement.

The progress of civilization is necessarily slow. Now and again gigantic strides have been made, but the general movement is gradual. It is easy for quacks in reform to heap abuse on the Church because it has not done more. It is a more difficult thing to lend a helping hand in raising the lower strata of society. Christianity has undermined the old barbaric customs and traditions. The tide has set in strongly towards the complete enfranchisement of woman, with what results the future will disclose.

SOCIAL PURITY.

Where woman is degraded and children are a burden, social purity can not be maintained in any very high degree. This was notably true of the

imperial age. For a long time impurity had been prevalent in Greece. Plato recommended a community of wives. Pericles was bewitched by a courtesan. Socrates acknowledged his indebtedness to the instruction of a dissolute woman. It was no disgrace for even married men to live with *hetærae*, "female [companions]." The very gods were guilty of licentiousness. Even the much praised Grecian art had a corrupting influence. Unnatural vice was common, and had the sanction of philosophers.

The Romans were originally more virtuous, and they retained their heritage longer. But in the imperial age the Empire was sunken in the mire of defilement. Adultery was no moral disgrace; it was regarded simply as an "interference with the rights and property of a free man." There was no protection for a wife against the infidelity of her husband. There was an appalling lack of chastity on both sides. Modesty was forgotten. Literature was degraded.

Divorce was an affair of every day. Seneca could say: "There are women who count their years not by the number of consuls, but by the number of their husbands." (Quoted by Ulhorn.) Juvenal satirized the frequency of divorces. "Passion, interest, or caprice," says Gibbon, "suggested daily motives for the dissolution of marriage. A word, a sign, a message, a letter, the mandate of a freedman, declared the separation; the most tender

of human connections was degraded to a transient society of profit or pleasure." (Chapter xlv.)

Marriage fell into contempt. It was debased to the level of any partnership. Most men preferred the freedom of the single state. The law had to interfere and tax the unmarried.

Of course, it is not to be supposed that there is any state of society so bad that exceptions to the general depravity may not be found.

The gospel inculcates perfect purity. No excuse is allowed for social impurity, no deviation from the strict standard. The requirement of the New Testament does not cease with outward chastity, but demands purity of thought and heart.

Christ gave his sanction to marriage. Paul regarded it as honorable. The marriage bond was sacred. One only cause was accounted sufficient to dissolve it until death set the surviving party free. The strict rule properly represented the principle of Christian purity, and it was needful for the protection of society.

This principle was observed and insisted on by the early Christians. The union of husband and wife was a common figure to represent the sacred bond which existed between Christ and the Church. No violation of the sacredness of the tie could be tolerated. "All forms of illicit intercourse were profanation."

We must admit that the Church did not continue to hold up this lofty standard. The reaction

against heathen immorality gave an undue prominence to celibacy and virginity. Asceticism was not a product of the gospel, but a reaction against licentiousness. True, it was strengthened and fortified by a false construction of Scripture; but in itself it was a morbid development and a source of much evil. It was unnatural, and therefore it destroyed the very object for which it was supposed to have been practiced; namely, purity of life. Nevertheless it was retained in the interest of an ambitious hierarchy. It is as far removed from the spirit of the Gospel as winter is from summer. It was the influence of the Christian family, and not overstrained asceticism, which exerted a beneficial influence on Roman society.

The old Teutonic form of marriage implied a purchase. The husband had rights of possession, which, if violated, could be compensated with money. In the family a wife was in the power of the husband, in civil life he was her representative. The husband was protected against infidelity, but not the wife. After Roman influence began to be felt, divorce became comparatively easy and frequent.

Christianity directly opposed these evils. By degrees a better state of things was realized. In the course of time it found expression in legislation. It elevated public opinion and made unchastity a disgrace. It made wholesale violation of

social purity impossible. It abolished voluntary dissolution of the marriage bond. It limited the grounds for divorce. It greatly enhanced domestic felicity. It sanctified the family life. It secured equal rights in marriage and divorce. It secured the protection of women by stringent laws and a pronounced and decided public sentiment.

It will be said that all this has been slowly won and is yet imperfect. It must be remembered that Christianity is no arbitrary power, bending all opposition to its will by force. It makes its appeal to individuals. It solicits, but does not compel assent to its principles. The power which it exerts upon those outside of the Christian community is only indirect. It can not reform them by one independent movement. It can never lose its identity as a moral force. The followers of Christ are the leaven of society, not a mechanical lifting machine. It is not to be expected that those who are without the community of believers should attain the ideal of Christian purity. Still the leaven is permeating society, and its salutary effect is everywhere apparent. The very standard of morals by which Christians are put to the test before the world is a product of Christianity itself.

On no other foundation could a pure society exist. Contrast the present condition of heathen morality with that which prevails even in the present imperfect attainment of Christian countries. It

must be evident, even from the condition of social life in the lower grades of social life in our own country, where only the twilight of the gospel is seen, that if Christianity were taken away, a hopeless decline in morals would ensue.

CHAPTER IX.

SLAVERY.

WHEN Paul wrote to Philemon requesting him to receive Onesimus no longer as a slave, but as a brother beloved, he gave expression to the spirit of Christian love which must ultimately break the fetters of all bondmen the world over. Christianity did not lay down a law of political life, nor did it designate the particular social institutions which ought to exist in the world; but it did define the spirit which must prevail in individual Christians. It magnified the bond of Christian brotherhood, and inculcated a reign of charity. Of course its influence would soon be felt in society at large. Channing has well said: "Who can measure the power of Christian philanthropy, of enlightened goodness, pouring itself forth in prayers and persuasions, from the press and pulpit, from the lips and heart of devoted men, and more and more binding together the wise and good in the cause of the race? All other power may fail; this must triumph. It is leagued with God's omnipotence. It is God himself, acting in the hearts of his children. It has an ally in every conscience, in every human breast, in the wrong-doer himself. This spirit has but begun its work on earth. It is

breathing itself more and more through literature, educations, institutions, and opinion. Slavery can not stand before it." (Works, Boston, page 690.)

This spirit of Christianity came early into conflict with a gigantic system of human degradation. It was one of the objections raised against the Christians by Celsus that they received the ignoble crowd, and promised them equal recognition. Such a thing was unknown in heathenism. The evil influence of slavery was everywhere manifest. It blunted the moral sense. It led to deception and murderous intent on the one hand, and to brutal tyranny on the other. It was a source of infinite misery and social rottenness. The higher motives of life which secure purity, diligence, and contentment never touched the slave. His highest security was in secrecy; his greatest incentive to labor, the master's whip. Roman slavery was particularly brutal. Slaves were ordered to death for the slightest offenses. If a master was found murdered, all his slaves were at once executed. The cruel sufferings which were sometimes inflicted are indescribable. It is said that Pollio fed the lampreys for his table with the slaves whom he had caused to be slain. There were some exceptional cases of humane treatment of slaves; but their general condition was one of unbearable misery.

Rome was not alone in this harsh treatment of these unfortunate mortals. Greece was little better. Cruelty was the prevailing custom of antiquity.

Let one more instance be cited. - Thucydides gives a heartrending account of the cruelties heaped upon Athenian captives in the Syracusan war. The Sicilian allies of the Greeks were sold as slaves. The Athenians were sent to the stone-quarries. There they were allowed but one pint of barley and half a pint of water per day. Many of them perished from dampness, exposure, starvation, and the miasmatic poison of their loathsome quarters. (Book VII, chap. lxxxvii.) Yet the cruelty was perhaps no greater than the Athenians themselves would have practiced on their conquered enemies. The Church could not effect an immediate cure of this disease. It had too deeply affected the whole system of society. The Church itself was bleeding from persecution. Here, as elsewhere, the power of Christianity must work through the individual. Christ himself predicted a gradual progress of the truth in remodeling the world. The kingdom of God was to come not with observation, but within human hearts. It is doubtful whether, in the extreme poverty of the Empire, wholesale liberation of slaves would have been a wise policy. They would have been forced for support to prey upon society. The way must be prepared. Christianity circulated freely among slaves; and not infrequently they were the means employed for the conversion of their masters. In such instances, social differences would not check the spirit of brotherly charity. The Church admitted the Christian slave to the

Supper of the Lord, and recognized no difference between "bond and free." Master and servant felt themselves brethren of the same family. The old relation virtually ceased. In such circumstances the former cruelties could not exist. In many cases the slaves were manumitted by Christian masters. The usual tendency was in this direction. The catacombs leave no record of a distinction between master and slave in the Christian communion.

On this subject Lecky remarks: "The services of Christianity were of three kinds,—it supplied a new order of relations, in which the distinction of classes was unknown; it imparted a moral dignity to the servile classes; and it gave an unexampled impetus to the movement of enfranchisement." (*Hist. of European Morals.*)

It exerted a decided influence on legislation after the victory of Constantine. The way was made easier for the manumission of slaves. They were protected from cruelty. The natural right of liberty was recognized. In the Justinian Code, every presumption was recorded in favor of the slave. Enfranchisement was made still easier. Killing a slave was reckoned as murder. Legislation was immeasurably improved; but even then it did not keep pace with public opinion, which more and more accorded immunities to the slave.

Substantial progress was steadily made, and, though the advancement was confessedly slow, there is no shadow of a doubt on which side the whole

force of Christian influence was steadfastly arrayed. Slowly indeed, but surely, better times came. "The eleventh and twelfth centuries saw the number of slaves in Italy begin to decrease. Early in the fifteenth, a writer quoted by Muratori speaks of them as no longer existing. The greater part of the peasants in some countries of Germany had acquired their liberty before the end of the thirteenth century." (Hallam, *Middle Ages*, 1200.) Unfortunately, it was not till the nineteenth century that the slave-trade was finally abolished in Britain and her colonies. It had, however, been previously reduced to a minimum.

That it lingered so long in the United States is a foul blot on our civilization. Still its evils were apparent only in the light of Christianity. It was incomparably milder and had more extenuating circumstances than the slavery of Greece or Rome. It was the bondage of a supposedly inferior race; theirs, the enslavement of those who were of the same blood with themselves. By many it was supposed to have a tendency to civilize, and so was deemed a mercy to those who bore its yoke. In spite of all that, it must be branded as a crime which no mitigating circumstances can excuse. The last great battle of slavery, oppression, and stagnation against Christianity, freedom, and progress was fought out on the soil of the fairest republic on which the sun ever shone. With awful judgment was the crime expiated in blood. In the words of

Dr. Storrs, "The ethics of the New Testament then marched behind bayonets. The roll of a thunder as awful as that which spoke from Sinai was heard beneath the roar of artillery; and it was the irresistible force of Christianity, which could not be baffled and could not be bribed, overruling politics, governing battle, and finding a voice in the great Proclamation which in our time erased from the statute-book the last vestige of slavery."

The Feudal System, which for several centuries prevailed throughout Europe, was productive of some good and of many evils. Not the least among the latter was the inherent principle of caste, based upon the right of possession and of service. From the king on his throne to the villain at his tasks, there was a descending gradation of social and political rank. The lingering system of serfdom, which bound the laborers to the soil, was the last remnant of the old Feudal System to be destroyed by the force of modern European civilization. In itself it was a species of slavery. The serf, however, remained on the soil, and was transmitted from one possessor to another with the soil. His position was therefore better than that of the African slave; yet he was in every sense a slave, and subject to the capricious will of his master.

The system of serfdom involved a large part of the European peasantry in ignorance and degradation, which have oppressed them even in this century. But there was a powerful though silent force

at work for their liberation. The Church had not been able to accomplish much; but when the spirit of Christianity prevailed, the belief in equal rights began to prevail, also. Public opinion was improved. The press took up the cause of the peasants, and advocated their liberties.

The first direct influence of the better feeling was seen in the emancipation by individual owners of the serfs on their domains. In various countries the sovereigns pressed the duty of emancipation upon the nobility in their realms. The last remains of the system were not destroyed, however, till the middle of the present century.

It could only be a question of time. The ideas of equality and brotherhood, when spread abroad and recognized in the life and practice of mankind, must inevitably bring to destruction the old systems of subjection and oppression, and establish the reign of justice and liberty.

CHAPTER X.

LABOR, AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH.

WHERE slavery exists, labor is necessarily degraded. The existence of serfdom made an honored and honorable peasantry impossible. The great masses of the Roman freemen did not expect to support themselves by engaging in some fitting occupation. There was no honorable employment for them. They must either submit to bear the degrading drudgery which placed them on a level with slaves, or remain in idleness. They regularly preferred the latter. They were of importance only as a political factor; hence they were fed and amused at public expense. The great middle class of modern times was unknown. The barbarians retained the sentiment of personal independence and individual liberty. Still, with them, war and the chase were the only really honorable occupations. All ordinary labor was performed by menials. The degradation of labor was perpetuated in the Feudal System. The practice of villanage was continued through the Middle Ages, and extended in some countries far into the modern period. It was forced at last to succumb to the principle of a larger liberty.

Christianity dignified labor. It was no longer a disgrace, but an honor. Jesus himself was identified

with the common people. He was the reputed son of a carpenter, and himself labored at the carpenter's bench. He chose his disciples from among the people. Several of them were fishermen. Paul was a tent-maker. The Christians were exhorted to industry. The Church felt it a duty to procure work for its members when out of employment. Its rule was that, if any man was unwilling to work, he was not entitled to eat. It encouraged neither tramps nor mendicants. The custom of voluntary poverty crept into the Church at a later time, through a morbid tendency to asceticism and a misinterpretation of Christ's charge to the rich young man in the Gospel history. From the beginning it was not so.

The New Testament is not, however, a treatise on political economy; and Christianity is not, and does not contain, any system of economics. It would almost seem as though Christ and the apostles inculcated a species of communism. The dangers of riches, the love of money, the oppression of the poor, receive a large share of attention in the Gospels; and the cold selfishness and wicked unbelief of earthly tyrants are made the object of no small denunciation. Yet it must be evident that it is the spirit which is condemned, and not the accident of fortune. Any spirit which makes earthly good the chief object of attainment in life is contrary to the teaching of Christianity. The hard-hearted cruelty which gloats over gathered treasures while suffering

penury is visible on every hand, can not be tolerated where Christian charity and brotherly love are deemed essential elements of character. That system of economics, whatever it may be, which involves selfish aggrandizement and cruel luxury on the one hand, and biting poverty on the other, is contrary to the ethics of the New Testament. There must at least be the exercise of charity and benevolence. Self-denial is a cardinal virtue—in fact, a necessity in the Christian life. It is hard, but not impossible, for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is impossible for a man who trusts in riches, whatever share of this world's goods he may possess.

But Christianity does not teach communism. Ananias and Sapphira were not punished for retaining a part of their goods, but for lying. The community of goods at Jerusalem, in the first few weeks or months of the Christian society, was voluntary. When the societies grew larger and more numerous, the practice became impossible, and was discontinued.

The teachings of Christ have no tendency to interfere with the rights of property. Any violation of those rights is most positively forbidden. Stealing, cheating, overreaching, any means by which one should be deprived of that which morally belongs to him is branded as sinful. The possession of property is in the Christian view a stewardship from God. Each possessor is to be

held accountable for his administration. Jesus sternly refused to interfere when requested to settle a property dispute between two brothers. It was an example for all later times.

Unfortunately the Church did not always heed the lesson. Too often it gave advice in such cases. Too frequently it laid covetous hands on the property of its votaries.

Nevertheless Christianity enjoined a spirit of self-sacrifice, and, while encouraging all to "be not slothful in business," demanded a life of devotion inconsistent with a continual mad rush for wealth, or an overmastering desire for earthly comfort.

So far as the Christian principle prevailed, either with the Church or with the individual, there would always be an outlet for any surplus of wealth that might accrue, in charitable distribution. A recent writer already frequently quoted has well said: "With Christianity began the organized and individual charity of modern Europe, which for eighteen centuries has wiped away so many tears, softened so much suffering, saved so many young lives from misery and sin, ministered at so many deathbeds, made the solitary evening of life so sweet to so many forsaken ones, and the morning glad to so many who would have been born to sorrow and shame, which in so many countries has cared for the sick, the blind, the deaf, the crippled, the outcast and tempted, the young, the orphan, the foundling, and the aged." (*Gesta Christi*.) All

this was the outcome of that principle of Christian love which is essential in the gospel.

Christianity has tended to reduce pauperism by reducing vice in society, the greatest of all sources of poverty and distress,—vice that eats out the vitality and cripples the powers of body and mind; vice that involves the destruction of acquired property and the increase of need; vice that leads to idleness and destroys all the nobler ambitions of manhood.

Again, Christianity has tended to remove distress by elevating the individual, and by giving him higher ideas of life and nobler incentives for action. It makes cringing dependence impossible. It insures against dishonesty and voluntary idleness. A lazy Christian is a misnomer. Christianity supplies an undergirding of hope which encourages a man to meet and bear the ills of life, and which banishes every groveling spirit.

Christianity promotes sobriety and good morals, industry and economy. It provides no plan for the organization of society, no method for the production and distribution of wealth; but it does define and fashion the character which affords the proper basis for a healthy and healthful form of society, and it does inculcate the spirit which ought to prevail in the production and distribution of wealth, and without which all forms and plans of political economy must fail of complete success.

The present relation of labor and capital is a

serious problem. Thus far no satisfactory solution has been found. Neither the annihilation of the rights of property on the one hand, nor the degradation of labor on the other, will answer. There can be no toleration of selfish aggrandizement in a properly conducted society, there can be no allowance for voluntary idleness and willing dependence. Devouring wolves and indolent parasites are alike enemies to the community.

Whatever the ultimate form of society may be, the final solution of the problem will consist in a just application of the principles of Christianity. Not until servants perform their duties, "not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart," and employers treat their employees "no longer as servants, but as brethren beloved," will the question be finally settled.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE.

CHRISTIANITY is not primarily an intellectual system. It is, however, philosophical, and it therefore answers to the requirement of our intellectual life. "Christ Jesus is made unto us wisdom" (1 Cor. i, 30), and that in the largest sense. The Christian truth recognizes the individual personality of man and the proper relation of thought, sensibility, and will. It appeals to man as capable of knowledge; it is the truth. It presents to man the highest motives of activity in his relation to God, in the possibility of holiness and happiness. It seeks for the determinate affection in love for the Supreme Being of the universe.

It solves the problem of man's origin and destiny, and of his present relation to the world and to the Creator. "It has made familiar as household words of practical life what were once the speculations of the philosopher, the aspirations of the poet, the secret mysteries of the initiated. For it puts forth, again and again, the most positive declarations that this individual nature is divine—not indeed a god, or an emanation of God, but yet made in his image; that it has a spiritual life now,

that it has an immortality beyond the grave." (Barry, *Manifold for Christ*, page 216.)

It gives us this knowledge, not in abstractions, but in the concrete personality of Jesus. He is the revelation of the Divine in the human. He is the true Son of man, in whom the unity of humanity is made manifest. In him is the resurrection and the life, the pledge of immortality.

In view, then, of its philosophical completeness, Christianity throws light on the great questions which have agitated the minds of the deepest thinkers in all ages. At the same time, unlike all abstract intellectual systems, it reveals, in concrete and personal form, truth which is intelligible and applicable to all.

It would be strange, therefore, if Christianity did not give an impetus to intellectual development, such as had resulted from no other influence.

It can not be denied that there were some remarkable examples of mental power and genius among heathen races. Greece was without doubt the home of native poetic genius and philosophical speculation. It was also the birthplace of literature and art. It is necessary to observe, however, that in Greece religion contributed little to mental culture, that the reign of varied intellectual power and activity was brief, that it had declined long before the Christian era, and that the appearance of phenomenal genius may often consist with very little apparent intellectual elevation of the masses.

Still we must acknowledge that the world is greatly indebted to the influence of Greek and Roman thought and literature in all subsequent mental and literary progress.

It is charged with loud vociferation, and it must be admitted, that the Church has often been an enemy to free intellectual inquiry. The Church, having once decided that its theories were based on revelation, was naturally conservative, and jealous of any innovations. Having once set up a standard of truth and defined its limitations, it could tolerate no difference in opinion. But the very spirit of free inquiry which was opposed to the Church was itself a product of Christianity. The Inquisition finds no support in the New Testament. On the contrary, candid inquiry finds there the utmost encouragement. Jesus gave no quarter to trifling cavilers and dishonest tricksters, but he had all patient sympathy for the honest seeker after truth. By that standard ought Christianity to be judged. It is unfair to load upon it the failures, faults, and iniquities of a gigantic organization assuming to dictate in its name. Nevertheless for centuries, even the Church was in the forefront of all intellectual advancement. Monasteries were the only real conservators of learning during the "Dark Ages." There, in the narrow inclosure and dim light of his cell, with painful patience, the monk copied manuscripts, became familiar with the classics, and studied theology and science. The

only learning that remained was preserved and enlarged under the direction of the Church.

That the gospel had an inspiring and broadening influence on the minds of the apostles will scarcely be questioned. The process by which Peter the Galilean fisherman was transformed into Peter the "Rock" and apostle of the truth, is not based on any passing influence, but upon the teaching and the life of Christ. Peter comes to the front so often that one can almost see the steps by which the proud, impulsive man becomes the strong, immovable disciple. The Peter who preached at Pentecost, and who wrote the epistles which bear his name, must have received more than a university training since the time when his faith failed on the sea of Galilee, or when he rebuked the Master for his prediction of Calvary's suffering.

Paul the apostle and writer of inspired epistles was no less a man of gigantic intellect and of acute and profound logical powers than was Saul the Pharisee and persecutor.

The Apostle John, if he wrote the books attributed to him, certainly received an education in the experience and contemplation of the gospel never surpassed in the case of any other man. If he did not write them, then somebody else, whose name is unknown, and who received from Christianity an intellectual development which is the wonder and admiration of all Christendom, must have written them. In either case (and we hold

firmly to the former) the gospel was an effective source of mental power.

The same is true of the other New Testament writers. Of course, when we attribute the efficiency of the authors of the New Testament to inspiration, the question at issue is at once admitted, and there is no need for further argument.

While Christianity reveals in the person of Jesus truth intelligible to all as the basis of faith, and presents his life and teaching as the example, the source and rule for our essential and practical life, it places on record great facts for our contemplation, and suggests profound questions for our consideration. The individual energies of the Christian are necessarily aroused, and his mental activities quickened. Naturally he becomes, in some measure at least, a theologian and a philosopher.

The record of the life of Jesus and the revelation of God must be kept in the language of men. Hence the need of a sacred book containing the testimony of the Lord.

How shall that book be recognized, its limitations determined, its integrity preserved? How shall it be interpreted? What does it teach in general and in particular? How shall its great lessons of God, of Christ, of man, of sin and redemption, etc., be conceived and set forth in metaphysical and systematic form?

Such were some of the great questions which

awakened the most profound thoughts and aroused the intellectual powers of the early Christians. While the classic training was not ignored, the great truths and problems of the gospel formed the basis of the highest culture in the Christian Church. Such giants of intellectual power as Ignatius, Origen, Tertullian, Augustine, and many others were the product of the gospel. The keen and profound intellectuality of the Nicene Church was nourished and sustained by consideration of the Christian truth in its varied bearings. Schools were not numerous, but self-culture was universal among the Christians. Notwithstanding the vagaries of that age, the world must honor its profound philosophical strength.

Christianity has ever given an incentive to the investigation of its own claims and lessons. The study of the Scriptures, of Christian doctrines and phases of life, has not been confined to those who have professed the experience they inculcate. Christianity has demanded and necessitated study on the part of its opponents. So both among its friends and its enemies it has been the means of quickened intellectual life.

In its influence on the mental activities of the lower classes the gospel was especially unique. The converted slave had as much right to meditate on its truths as the rich freeman. Often it happened that the socially ignoble became the noble defenders of the faith. There was nothing esoteric in

Christianity. No school or caste had a special right to any part of revelation, or to the consideration of any Christian truth. Thus it had an almost irresistible tendency to elevate the lower grades of society wherever it was received. A religion which consisted of fixed ceremonies, external service, and mechanical arts could have no such effect. They required no thought, and did not appeal to the deliberate choice of the individual worshiper. The gospel addressed itself to the reason and moral sensibility of men. It sought for a deliberate response. When Roman Catholicism became so much a religion of ceremonies and outward service, it failed in proportionate measure to represent evangelical Christianity and lost in that proportion the power to enlighten and increase the intellectual life of the poorer classes; but wherever the evangelical principle prevailed and the Scriptures were freely circulated, intelligence was promoted.

The need of popular education very early became apparent in Christian communities. In fact, the principles of Christianity were at first inculcated solely by the voice of the living teacher. As the people believed, the necessity of deeper study and greater familiarity with the truth began to be felt. Christian theology became an object of inquiry. Rudimentary schools were formed, notably at Antioch and Alexandria. Secular learning was as yet left to the philosophers and the heathen teachers. But that could not last long; for the purpose

of the heathen instruction, to increase the luxury of the state and the self-gratification of the individual, could have nothing in common with the spirit of the gospel.

Alfred the Great in England, and Charlemagne on the Continent, made strong efforts to popularize education. Christian scholars and Christian rulers joined hands to aid in the noble undertaking. Out of the chaotic darkness which followed the fall of the Western Empire, slowly but surely Christianity evolved the means of secular education. Then came enlargement and expansion. Great universities grew up, and students came from far and near to drink at these fountains of knowledge. Some of the old universities remain to this day as monuments of the gigantic labors of the Christians to ennoble the intellectual life of mankind. The stream of popular learning has been ever growing deeper and wider.

Christianity awakened thought and set the world in search of truth. She has compassed every field of research, and enlisted the noblest intellects in her service. She has dispelled error, corrected abuse, restored forgotten truth. She has ever been too conservative for Utopianism, too radical for stagnation. She has been the mother of science and the guardian of true philosophy. The common school is the embodiment of her genius, and the millions of learners her foster-children. She controls the finest colleges in the world. She has

a press and a literature entirely her own. She has impressed her influence on the whole literary life of the modern world. She is the friend of refinement and art, and the faithful ally of all that pertains to intellectual advancement. She is neither too lowly to be courted by the great, nor too exalted to befriend the humble. Her benign favors of knowledge and power are poured forth profusely on every hand. She leads the thinking of the world and controls its destinies.

Christianity has not failed to produce distinguished leaders and increased forces in the various lines of intellectual pursuit. It formed the very foundation of theology, and the great masters of that divine science received their inspiration from it. Great names, great truths, varied learning, deep research, profound thought, keen dialectic skill, adorn and enrich its pages.

Its message has been heralded by great preachers, and its principles defended by great orators. The halls of legislation and the courts of justice have caught the fire of its eloquence, and have resounded with pleas for righteousness, justice, and reform.

Its wonderful words of light and truth have been translated into innumerable languages and dialects. It led to the formation of alphabets, the creation of written languages, and the purification of the vernacular among many peoples. In several well-defined cases it created a popular literature

and formed the basis of great literary wealth and beauty. It preserved classic literature and revived classic culture. It gave an impetus to linguistic study which bids defiance to all opposition.

It has had a long line of learned expositors, who have called to their aid the laborers in numerous departments of learning. They have with great erudition endeavored to correct the text of Scripture. They have labored to set forth its meaning in the clearest terms. The radiating influences of this one department of sacred literature have extended to all ages and countries of the world. Numerous apparently irrelevant branches of science have lent their aid, and have in turn been quickened and extended.

Music and art have been enlisted in the service of the Church. Too often, indeed, an iconoclastic people has labored to check the inspiration of art. But for all that, art has made progress under Christian influences. If it did not introduce new principles, it at least gave new subjects and nobler conceptions. This can be seen in the Catacombs as well as in the sublime creations of an Angelo and a Raphael.

“The history of church building, from the simple basilicas of the fourth century to the perfect Gothic cathedrals of the thirteenth and fourteenth, exhibits, like the history of the other Christian arts and sciences, a gradual subjection and transformation of previous Jewish and heathen forms by the

Christian principle." (Schaff.) Christian sentiment has been incorporated into church buildings, grand, stately, rich, ornate. It has fashioned public edifices of all sorts, and private dwellings. Great thoughts and exalted conceptions have been hammered, chiseled, molded into marble, wood, and metal. Consecrated genius has not failed to find a true inspiration and a worthy object in this department of service to the Church.

Poetry and music are twin servants of Christianity. They are made to express the loftiest sentiments and noblest aspirations of the soul. The Christians readily employed what former times had produced in these branches of art, so far as it could be made acceptable and expressive. From the use of the inspired poetry of the Hebrews they advanced to new creations. New forms were devised, new conceptions introduced, higher aspirations, and more purely devotional feelings than could be found in any uninspired writings of previous ages. Appropriate music must be invented and rendered. The devotional life of the Church must find adequate expression. The great galaxy of brilliant stars in literary and musical composition have drawn their light from the visitation of the "Dayspring from on high." Time would fail to tell of Hilary and Ambrose; of Gerhart, Watts, and Wesley; of Dante and Milton; of Shakespeare and Schiller; of Tennyson, Bryant, Whittier, Longfellow, and a hundred others; of Gregory, Handel,

Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, and countless others, who have directly or indirectly drawn their inspiration from the life and teaching of Jesus the Messiah, and whose lives have been made to yield in return their rich fruits to the honor of Christianity.

Volumes would not be sufficient to enumerate and describe the manifold intellectual activities and productions of the Christian age. To it must be ascribed the discovery of the modern method of scientific investigation and the varied avenues of scientific research, with the rich fruits of scientific knowledge, and the almost illimitable inventions to diminish labor, increase wealth, or enhance the comforts of life.

The very effort to make such an enumeration fills one with astonishment at the gigantic intellectual growth of eighteen hundred years. That it is due to Christianity is apparent from the fact that it is not found where the heathenism of the present is seen in its most characteristic forms, and that it began when the intellectual activity of the old world had practically ceased.

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE MORAL LIFE.

THE gospel introduced a new and vital moral force, derived from God, applicable to all classes, universal in its provisions, and of permanent character, being independent of the changing and perishable forms of human society. It is calculated to correct the inner life of the individual, and to inculcate the principles which should govern men in their mutual relation of association and dependence. It affords a regulated freedom of personal action, and at the same time inspires with high thoughts of charity, brotherhood, and social strength. That the moral force of the gospel has borne rich and abundant fruit in civilization must be acknowledged by even its most bitter enemies.

It is unnecessary to repeat the story of ancient wickedness already given in outline. The gluttony, luxury, and extravagance; the lust, licentiousness, and social impurity; the general decay, ostentation, and emptiness of society life; the passion for chariot races, public games and cruel sports; the intrigues and obscenities represented on the stage; the inefficiency of the old religion and the new philosophies, might form the subject for a long dissertation, but it is unnecessary. "The thing to be

carefully noted is this: that all this was a development, unique and awful, but entirely natural, in the society then foremost in the world." (Storrs, *Divine Origin*, etc., 260.)

In the face of all this, Christianity came with an ethical life and a moral force entirely unique. It required purity in the deepest recesses of the soul. Sincerity was absolutely essential to acceptance with God, and this not in ideal conception, but in actual fact. Not faith alone was required, but a faith which took possession of the whole being, and was productive of practical righteousness.

This was the firm foundation for a strong moral character, and such a character was attained in actual realization. Wherever the gospel was received, it transformed the life of believers. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." All the gentler virtues were here manifest in purest form and greatest measure. Of this fact the Catacombs, and even the heathen testimonies, furnish a sufficient record. In the finer qualities of soul the Christians have always excelled. The holiest affection, the tenderest sympathy, the sweetest peace, the purest joy, have ever been their standard experiences.

Nor was Christianity deficient in the more rugged virtues of courage, boldness, firmness, endurance, and sanctified aggressiveness. On the one hand, the disciples received the command: "Quit you like

men, be strong." On the other, they were told: "The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves." Thus the manly character was encouraged and tempered. Good soldiers of the cross must be both ready to endure hardness and to restrain passion.

The spirit of Christian courage and magnanimity attained a very early development through the opportunities which the persecution of the Church afforded for patient endurance and heroic fortitude.

The morbid asceticism which followed the union of Church and State was in some measure due to the search after an object for the exercise of the strong, manly virtues of courage and self-denial. The fortitude and patience in suffering of the ascetic call for admiration, although his morbid contempt of the world can not be too strongly condemned.

The bold heroic spirit, tempered by respect for the weak, reverence for purity, a noble sense of honor, and devotion to the service of the Cross, was essentially the spirit of chivalry. Charles Loring Brace speaks thus of the influence of the chivalric ideal: "It softened the cruelty of war in a barbarous age, led the popular mind away from material ends to certain ideas, sometimes whimsical, but more often generous and noble; it strengthened the position and power of woman, cultivated some of the purest virtues, and formed a conception of

character which has come down into modern society, and influenced countries where feudalism was never known." (*Gesta Christi*, 253.)

The religious idea accompanied the initiation of the knight. He bound himself to support and defend the Christian religion. He was required to maintain and exact justice without fear or favor, and to secure the punishment of wrong doers.

The stern character of the stoic can bear no comparison to the valiant magnanimous spirit of the knight, and all that was noble and generous in chivalry was an emanation from the Cross of Calvary. "By what means could pity for the unfortunate, generosity to the enemy, charity for the widow and orphan, unselfishness and consideration for others' feelings, and unswerving truthfulness, be taught the wild soldiers of the Middle Ages, as by the gospel?" (*Gesta Christi*, 267.)

These are the qualities that make up the modern idea of a gentleman. What constitutes a gentleman? Not wealth or high birth, broad lands or noble ancestry; not coveted position or envied social rank; not political power, or fame, or popularity; not the authority to command or the freedom to rule; not elegance or ease,—but a character and life unstained by fraud or deceit, untainted with covetousness or impurity, undisturbed by cowardice or cringing fear, unalloyed with the influences of avarice or meanness, insensible to the frown of a tyrant, the rage of an enemy, the

calumny of a slanderer, or the insidious corruptions of a seducer, impervious to the arts of deception or the insinuations of the flatterer's tongue; a character and life, noble, generous, benignant, considerate, charitable, honorable, just, patient, courteous, manly, courageous, hospitable, faithful, temperate, governed by lofty conceptions and honest purposes. "Mark the upright man."

If any man affirms that such an ideal has not been formed by Christianity, and that such a character is not the product of the gospel in civilization, it is impossible for him to tell what its source may be.

It will scarcely be denied that the general level of moral life has been elevated since the introduction of the gospel; that the standard of criticism has become more rigid and exacting; that life has become more serious, upright, and religious in Christian communities; that the old barbaric character and customs would not be tolerated in modern Christendom; that Christianity is strenuously endeavoring to purify and elevate life even in the by-places of the earth, and that it has a hopeful prospect of elevating the standard of life and strengthening character in the whole human race.

CHAPTER XIII.

PUBLIC OPINION, LAW, AND LEGISLATION.

THE morality of the law tends to parallel that of public opinion. All enduring efforts at reform must begin, therefore, in correcting and elevating public opinion. This is the mode of operation natural to Christianity. It begins with the individual, whom it enlightens, transforms, purifies. It establishes high and pure principles of character and action. It teaches each individual the ultimate law of duty to himself and to society. The sentiment spreads in the community, grows general, becomes consolidated, and expresses itself in politics and legislation.

Consolidated public opinion is a product of the Christian religion. It differs from the prevailing opinion of philosophers and teachers; it is emphatically the opinion of the public. It may be largely framed under the direction of teachers and leaders, but only when it has become the sentiment of the people at large is it in any true sense public opinion. Each particular philosophy had its own principles and modes of thought, its own attitude towards morality and legislation; but such a thing as a unified public opinion, sentiment, or feeling was unknown to the ancient civilizations. It is not

found in heathenism of either past or present. Mohammedanism is utterly devoid of it. It is said that the Sultan of Turkey can not even understand the idea and influence of public opinion as it exists in other parts of Europe and in America.

Public sentiment is in fact the common sense of the people. It is not simple, but complex in a very high degree. The virtues as well as the faults and foibles of private life come under its supervision. There is a limit beyond which, according to a common standard of judgment, a man's private character can not pass without public censure, expressed or unexpressed. Domestic life, family affairs, treatment of the inmates of the home, necessarily bear the restraint of public opinion. Social relations, business affairs, educational matters, religious observances, the relation of labor and capital, in fact all the concerns in which men are drawn into relation with each other, become the proper subjects for public opinion.

No one denies that such a complex prevailing sentiment has become incorporated in the body politic. It is as much ours as the air we breathe. It has penetrated our very nature, and can never be wholly eradicated.

It is not always a smooth, unvaried plain. It varies like the landscape upon which we may often gaze, composed of level ground, relieved here and there by hill and valley. It may sometimes seem mobile, like the waves of the sea. Still it retains

the same general level, and when it sinks or rises carries all with it.

The importance of such a public opinion as an element of power in politics and legislation can scarcely be overestimated. Christianity does not specify any form of government, does not designate any mode of legislation, or pass any laws for society as such. Fundamentally, its precepts, its laws, and its life are for the individual. Of course, it could not but modify politics and legislation. Its spirit, so far as it prevails, must permeate society in all its branches. By appealing to the religious nature and controlling the life of the individual, Christianity creates, exalts, and purifies public opinion, and thus promotes social and political improvement.

According to the old Roman idea, everything existed for the State. Education, care of the poor, penal regulations, provisions of war, all were maintained in the interest of the State. Yet the State was not considered as composed of individuals or as existing for them. Nor was the family supposed to be the essential element in the composition of the State. It centered in the governing power, but was otherwise an impersonal thing. The individual was nothing excepting as he contributed to the support and perpetuity of the State itself.

This idea was not peculiar to Rome. No protest of the people, no voice of appeal or wail of suffering from them, could alter the unchangeable

law of the Medes and Persians. Its force was derived from the governing authority; with which the people had nothing to do. So it was also in ancient Egypt; so in Assyria and Babylon.

There is a wide difference between monarchy as existing for its own sake and monarchy existing as a legitimate power, actually or professedly derived from the people. In the former case man was made for the State; in the latter the State was made for man. In the former case the Government was absolute; in the latter it is restricted by constitutional provisions, written and sealed in documents, or preserved in imperishable public opinion.

The modern republican idea goes still further, and involves the principle that all authority resides in the people, and is only temporarily delegated to representatives, who receive a limited jurisdiction and are responsible to their constituents.

Now, it is clear that, although Christianity did not directly oppose the old State idea, although the Christians submitted to authority and opposed all lawlessness, the principle of individualism and of personal responsibility involved in the Christian teaching and life must in time undermine the doctrine of impersonal authority and absolute sovereignty. The deification of State supremacy in the person of the emperor was abhorrent to the Christians. This was the very essence of the conflict which raged in the time of fiercest persecution. With prophetic instinct Rome saw that the Chris-

tians must be exterminated, or imperialism would eventually be destroyed.

Constantine, seeing that further resistance was useless, made a compromise with the Christian idea. It was perhaps the best thing that could then be done. He would accept his power from the God of the Christians, but he was the Emperor still.

The imperial idea passed over into the Church, and is perpetuated as much in the Roman hierarchy as in the absolute monarchy of the Russian czar. The Catholic idea of a universal spiritual empire, governed by the hierarchical principle under control of the pope, is certainly an approximate parallel to the temporal sovereignty of the Roman emperor.

For centuries these parallel ideas continued to exist, frequently aiding each other, often coming into bitter conflict. Philosophy was employed in the propagation and support of these principles. "Like the unity of the Church," says Bryce, "the doctrine of a universal monarchy had a theoretical as well as an historical basis, and may be traced up to those metaphysical ideas out of which the system we call realism developed itself." (Holy Roman Empire, 97.) So the realistic philosophy has ever been a favorite with Romanists. "In this view humanity is an essential quality present in all men, and making them what they are. . . . The common nature of the individuals thus gath-

ered into one Being is typified in its two aspects, the spiritual and the secular, by two persons, the world priest and the world monarch, who present on earth a similitude of the Divine unity." (Bryce, as above.)

It was this principle, together with the memory of the ancient Empire, which led, after the fall of Rome, to the formation of what is known in history of the "Holy Roman Empire."

The Feudal system involved essentially the same State idea, modified by the Teutonic love of personal independence. It served to bridge over the period of confusion when society was in a formative state after the period of barbarian migrations and victories. When definite social organization was finally effected, Europe was still pervaded with the spirit of absolutism.

It would be a needless task to rehearse the history of the process and the long conflicts through which the Christian principle of individualism and liberty gained ground and permeated the society of Europe. The scene of conflict frequently changes. Now it is in France, again in England, and then in Germany ; but it is the same old strife and struggle which fills up the measure of the Middle Age.

If the Reformation might be defined in one sentence, it would be said that it was chiefly the emancipation of the individual. Protestantism is emphatically a protest against the dominance of authority in matters of faith and reason. But it is

also a protest against all forms of despotism. It is individualism as against imperialism.

In the awful conflict which followed the beginning of the Reformation, each side sought for the aid and protection of the national Governments. In either case this was a compromise, but it was necessary. The national authority thus gained recognition and intrenched itself. Absolutism was as odious in this form as in any other. Here the conflict was renewed, sometimes with the sword, but also, and more successfully for individualism, in that quiet power of influence which elevates and strengthens the efficiency of public opinion and so corrects abuses. Thus modern nations have been influenced by the Christian principle, and the people have been gainers in an immeasurable degree.

On the new continent, and in the greater number of European nations, representative government is in highest favor, either in the form of republicanism, as in the United States, or in that of a limited and representative monarchy, as in England.

The constitutional history of the world is far from being complete; but the principle of New Testament liberty has entered into society and can never be overturned.

Whenever infidelity became an influence in politics, it utterly failed. The infidelity which developed in the extreme wing of Protestantism was a veritable Pandora's box of evils. It checked all advance in England, and made room for all forms

of political corruption. It made the French Revolution, professing the name of liberty, to become in fact a gigantic tyranny. It is a mere negation, and inevitably leads downward.

It is impossible to define the extent to which the Christian principle acts as a political factor in representative government. Such government is, approximately at least, an index to the character of the people. The success of Christianity among the people means the success of morality, and the security of progress in the nation.

Even before Christianity was recognized by the State as a legitimate religion, it began to affect legislation indirectly. When Constantine gave his voice for the new religion, its influence very decidedly affected the current of legislation. That influence is still more distinctly discernible in the Justinian Code. The discontinuance of cruel and licentious sports, the protection of children, the security of the rights of woman, recognition of the sanctity of marriage, the amelioration and limitation of slavery, the reformation of penal administration, the legalization of a Sunday rest, and even a modification of the forms in which the law was couched, attest the force of the Christian spirit.

Of the influence of the Church on Teutonic legislation Guizot says: "The Church did not labor less worthily for the improvement of civil and criminal legislation. We know to what a terrible extent, notwithstanding some few principles of

liberty, this was absurd and wretched; we have read of the irrational and superstitious proofs to which the barbarians occasionally had recourse, their trial by battle, their ordeals, their oaths of compurgation, as the only means by which they could discover the truth. To replace them by more rational and legitimate proceedings, the Church earnestly labored, and labored not in vain. . . . In criminal matters the punishment is proportioned to the offense, according to tolerably correct notions of philosophy, morals, and justice, the efforts of an enlightened legislator struggling against the violence and caprice of barbarian manners." (Hist. of Civilization.)

Sometimes the laws were in advance, morally, of the habits of the people; but they at least reflected the moral character of the legislators, who were frequently ministers of religion as well as lawyers. It may be that the most rational process of legislation was reversed, but the result was for the time productive of a higher moral tone and purpose in legal enactments.

The history of legislation is the history of a long and tedious progress, but it is a tolerably accurate gauge by which the advancement of the people may be measured. The common law, as well as special acts of legislation, is founded on the development of many centuries. Modifications are needed as time advances. The old codes could never be re-enacted. The moral sense of Christendom would

not tolerate them. The eyes of the statesman must look forward, not as those of a mere experimentalist, but of a true leader, who recognizes the onward trend of society. "As every civil code in its formation and growth adopts the moral code of the people, so the common law of England and the United States has absorbed, and is still absorbing, into itself the moral principles of Christianity." (Anderson.) The force of Christianity in legislation thus acts along two parallel lines—the formation and modification of the civil code, and the growth of the common law. This is true in varied degree, not only in England and the United States, but also throughout Christendom. (See Cooley, Constitutional Law, 8.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHRISTIANITY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

AT first glance it would seem that, in the public relations of nations to each other, Christianity had produced little effect. The destructive and desolating influences of war are still apparent. War does not always arise from the conflict of great principles, but often from petty quarrels of jealous diplomats. Standing armies continue to menace the peace of Europe. The aggressiveness of grasping greed has not ceased among nations. Yet, withal, it is probable that nowhere else can the indirect influences of Christianity be so clearly seen as in the interdependence and relations of modern nations.

There was no such thing as acknowledged international law among the ancient peoples. To the Greek, a stranger was an enemy and a barbarian. Captives in war might be killed, enslaved, or sold at the captor's pleasure. There were, indeed, rules of international conduct among the different peoples of Greece, sanctioned by the Amphictyonic League, but they were limited to the Grecian States, and were often suspended in practice; and the slaughter of prisoners or their perpetual enslavement, the annihilation of cities, and other equally cruel and barbarous practices, prevailed.

With the Romans, the laws of war knew no limitation but the extermination of the enemy. Prisoners of war lost their right of freedom, and were liable to perpetual slavery. When the *Jus Gentium* was finally evolved, it did not become a rule of action, but only expressed "the general principle of right, grounded in human nature." So far the *Jus Gentium* was a principle recognized in the civil law; but in practice it had scarcely any power over the relations of Rome with other nations. In this respect their right to exist depended upon their ability to exist.

The right of communication between nations was frequently violated, and ambassadors were savagely executed. This, it is true, was not the common practice, but it certainly was common enough. Hostility was looked on as the natural attitude of nations toward each other.

Naturally, the modification of international relations according to the Christian standard was slow. It could not be otherwise. The condition of things brought about by the centralization of power in the Roman Empire must first be modified. The Christian influence must take hold in the Empire itself, and in the hordes of barbarians who pounced upon it. The formative period, which followed the fall of the Western Empire, and in which from the chaotic confusion that prevailed in Europe, organized nations slowly emerged, must have well worn away before there could be any place for definite in-

ternational rules. The marvel is how even centuries sufficed to dispel that chaotic darkness. "But, in spite of all that was weak, ignominious, and morally disgraceful in these centuries, and in those which followed, the undestroyed power of the Christian religion continued to operate." (Storrs.)

Meanwhile disputes between princes were frequently referred to papal arbitration. This practice continued till the end of the fifteenth century, and even later. It never proved a satisfactory means of adjusting differences. It was the occasion of many arbitrary assumptions on the part of the pope, who himself often became involved in quarrels with princes. "As it was easy to foresee, the authority which the pontifical chair arrogated to itself on international questions, could not fail in time to lead to serious results among the several European States." (Gallaudet, *International Law*.)

Barbarous customs were prevalent throughout the Middle Ages, softened only by the spirit of chivalry and a growing sense of justice. International law is a voluntary thing, of force only where independent and self-controlling States come under its limitations by their own consent, freely given. So long as distinct national organization was wanting, no code of international rules could be formulated. So long as the pope assumed, or was permitted to arbitrate the disputes of nations, there was little room for the sentiment of international honor and justice to be developed.

To quote again from Gallaudet: "Regarded in its relation to international law, with which aspect alone we concern ourselves here, the Reformation of Luther and Calvin is one of the most important events of the world. . . . It not only inaugurated the giving of constitutions to the sovereign monarchies of Central Europe, it settled the fact that henceforth the relations of people to people would not depend on the will of the head of the Church, and stamped international law with a positive character which appears in all the works of the authors of this period." (International Law, p. 8, 9.) Thus it happened that not until nations realized their distinct individuality as sovereign powers, and began to be imbued with the principles of equality and humanity, and to feel their force as binding in all international relations, could desirable results be obtained.

Several treatises on this subject during the Reformation period contributed greatly to the enlightenment of the people. Particular reference should be made to the great work of Grotius, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, which, Hallam says, marks an epoch in philosophical history and in the politics of Europe. The author pleads for Christian principles in international relations, "good faith" between nations, the abolition of privateering, and the rights of prisoners of war.

It was in the treaty of 1648 that the first attempts at a definite international understanding and

a recognized mutual interdependence was made. At this time, also, the principle of the balance of power was introduced, which practically recognizes and guarantees the right of each nation to a separate and independent existence.

Since that time great progress has been made. The horrors of war have been greatly diminished. The principle prevails that war exists only between nations, and not between individuals. The rights of individuals are, therefore, regarded. Privateering is discontinued. Prisoners of war are treated with respect. The wounded are cared for with charity and carefulness.

The frequency of war is lessened, and the occasions for it limited. The present trend of affairs is toward arbitration and peaceful settlement of disputes. It is scarcely necessary to enumerate examples. Let the great Council at Geneva suffice for illustration. One of the most difficult questions of dispute between nations is quietly settled by impartial arbiters. The judgment is accepted by the two great nations concerned. The Prince of Peace shall rule. The oil of Christian charity shall be poured on the waters troubled by international differences, and shall lubricate the machinery of the great world-confederacy soon to appear.

The extension of commerce, the interchange of thought, international expositions, the free propagation of science, international associations both scientific and philanthropic, ecumenical religious

councils, resident representatives at foreign courts, the recognition of strangers' rights,—these, and many other things, mark the influence of the new relations which exist among the nations of the earth.

In all these relations absolute truth is expected, and accorded. Indeed, there seems no disposition toward treachery, and no possibility for its success if it did appear. Diplomacy is no longer a system of mutual deception. Commerce is not conducted for purposes of robbery or unfair gain. Piracy is destroyed. Unfortunately, the mercantile spirit has not yet been reduced to its legitimate place in life ; but even now an avowedly dishonest trader receives no tolerance. While national Churches still exist, the Christian religion is not merely national, but cosmopolitan, and destined to be universally acknowledged. Indeed, the only adequate interbond of union among modern nations is Christianity. Without it, multiplied means of communication would only result in increased hostilities or the dominance of some particular people. This fact is exemplified in the history of the ancient world. But Christianity, as Fisher says, “subordinates even patriotism to the law of righteousness and human brotherhood.” (Beginnings of Christianity.) “God has made of one blood all nations to dwell on all the face of the earth.” (Acts xvii, 16.) Christianity can not be circumscribed by national boundaries, but its spirit annihilates their offensive bulwarks and threatening armaments, and spreads

the desire of universal peace and mutual helpfulness.

To our limited vision the movement naturally appears slow, and only measurably successful. But it must be remembered that the world is still, speaking comparatively, in its infancy. When it has attained to full maturity, the race will have received the gospel of Christ, wars and rumors of war will have ceased, and the reign of brotherly love will have become universal, and all the world will observe the precept of the Master, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them."

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

WE have seen how the power of Christianity has proved itself sufficient in accomplishing its own outward progress in spite of the most gigantic obstacles, and in establishing new conceptions of God, of man, of man's relation to God, and man's duty to man. We have seen its power manifested in the liberation of childhood, in the elevation of woman, in securing the sanctity of marriage, and the purity of the home. We have seen how it has contributed to the abolition of slavery, the dignifying of labor, the defense of the rights of man, the progress of material prosperity, and the extension of charity. We have seen its power to create and purify public opinion, to break the yoke of tyrants, and enfranchise the individual. We have seen it at work amid the confusion of the "Dark Ages," tending to the organization and the amelioration of society. Lastly, we have noted its effectiveness in securing the recognition of the independence of nations, and the modification of international relations.

The subject has not yet been exhausted. It is possible to show how Christianity has produced institutions for the distribution of charity, the care of

the afflicted, and the reformation of the fallen. What has been its effect on agriculture and industrial arts, especially under the influence of the missionary impulse? It would be competent to ask how it has contributed to the amenities of life, increased comfort, regulated and enhanced enjoyment. But further illustration is unnecessary. The world is now immeasurably in advance of what it was two thousand years ago. As Martineau has said, "Every one is sensible of a change in the whole climate of thought and feeling the moment he crosses any part of the boundary which divides Christian civilization from heathenism." (*Studies of Christianity*, 144.)

What has produced this change? Plainly not Christianity alone, not any one influence alone; but that Christianity has been the chief and potent factor is clearly evident. There was no such state of advanced civilization in Greece, though Greece was the center of art, philosophy, and literature. It was not in Rome, though Rome was the mistress of the world, and rich in growing wealth and power. It was not in Corinth or Alexandria, the leaders of commerce. Nor can it be said the Old World needed more time to develop such a civilization. Already, when Christianity came, corruption had set in, and there was no power to stay its destructive force. The skeleton from the closet stalked forth in broad daylight. Ghostly Despair had taken up an abode among the common haunts of men. Christianity

alone might not have solved the problem; but no power on earth could have done it without Christianity.

While no account of the historical effects of Christianity can afford conclusive proofs of its divinity, enough has been brought forward to furnish a fair presumption in favor of its supernatural origin. It is true that maxims and precepts belonging to the Christian teaching are found also in other systems; but no such life and no such power was anywhere else in existence. The fact that, notwithstanding all the lofty precepts, inspiring literature, and profound philosophy to be found in heathenism, it proved an utter failure, and that, in spite of all opposition, Christianity proved a triumphant success, is an overwhelming presumption on the side of its supernatural origin, and a sufficient reason for the deepest reflection. There must always be a proportion between an effect and the cause which produces it. The transcendent effects which Christianity has produced, surely indicate that it did not spring from the earth. That the evidence can not be irresistible is involved in the very nature of the subject.

It is natural to suppose that the introduction of such a religion into the world would be accompanied by supernatural signs and miraculous hints of its power and compass. The line of argument leads us back to the life of Christ on the earth.

How else could a religion, which essentially consists in the life of a person, revealed as the source of life and spiritual power for the world, be made manifest? "In a sense which is true of no other religion, Christianity is Christ himself. In all its aspects the Christian life in any soul claims to be the reproduction, by light and by grace, of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Barry, *Manifold Witness*, 280.)

In view, then, of the historical facts leading back to the life of Christ in the world, what was that life? In brevity a mere transient gleam, a sudden flash of light breaking forth upon the horizon, only to disappear as suddenly. But there was in it all the potency of eternity. How important, therefore, everything in the study of that life becomes! What impression did Jesus make upon the people in general, and what upon his immediate followers? What testimony did he give of himself? Clearly the course of his life fulfills our highest expectation when we come back to its consideration with a knowledge of its power in the history of our race.

What wonder that we find it predicted in prophecy, anticipated in the needs of men, and heralded by angel choirs? What wonder that we find in it simplicity and grandeur, the gentleness that would not "break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax," and the power that moves the world? To such a life, miracles are as natural as the clear

sunlight in a southern sky. No wonder that he whose power has had such an influence in civilization, to enlighten the world, to revive the hope and cheer the life of mankind, would, as he beheld the miseries of men, open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and give speech to the dumb. What wonder that he, who came professedly that he might heal the moral diseases of men and purify their life, had compassion on the sick, and cleansed the lepers? Miracles were the foreshadowing of his kingdom in its infinite love and power. Their absence would have been the unaccountable thing.

Viewed from this standpoint, everything in his life comports with his testimony of himself. He who could still the tempest, heal the sick, and raise the dead; he who "spake as never man spake;" "in whom there was no sin,"—surely this one had "power on earth to forgive sins," to speak the "words of eternal life," and to take away for the believer "all unrighteousness." It was the manifestation of the life of Christ, as the Son of God, which influenced the world for centuries, and directed its energies toward the emancipation of the human race.

There is, however, no sufficient and convincing evidence which can take the place of faith. It is only when we have risen to full acceptance of the Word of God, and reliance thereon, that we can expect to obtain full personal satisfaction. Only as

the truth penetrates into the inner life, and becomes effective, not merely as the object of thought, but also as a power, can it be said to have fulfilled its office as truth, and only then can the soul itself find peace.



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